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THE SEVENTH THOUSAND





REV. G. C. RANKIN, D. D.

The Story of My Life

Or More than a Half Century as I Have Lived It and Seen It Lived

By G. C. RANKIN, D. D.



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by
G. C. RANKIN

The Story of My Life

or

More Than a Half Century as I Have Lived It and Seen It Lived

Written by Myself at My Own Suggestion and That of Many Others Who Have Known and Loved Me

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Dedicated

TO MY BELOVED WIFE WHO, FOR MORE THAN THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, HAS WALKED BY MY SIDE AND FAITHFULLY DONE HER PART TO MAKE MY WORK FOR THE CHURCH SUCCESSFUL AND EFFICIENT; WHO HAS UNDERGONE THE INCONVENIENCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ITINERANCY WITHOUT A MURMUR;

AND

TO MY CHILDREN WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LOVING AND OBEDIENT TO ME, WHOSE CONDUCT SINCE THEY ARRIVED AT YEARS OF RESPONSIBILITY HAS NEVER CAUSED ME ANY PAIN OR SORROW, AND WHOSE CHARACTERS ARE GOOD AND UPRIGHT, THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

A FOREWORD

This book is not technically an autobiography, for it deals with many persons and incidents outside of myself. Nevertheless it deals largely with my life as I have lived it. As a result I have had to parse myself in the first person, singular number and nominative case in a much larger degree than has been tasteful to my modesty; yet my excuse for it is found in the fact that those who may feel any special interest in the book will do so because of the interest they feel in my life as I have lived it.

So I have grouped certain periods and certain incidents around myself and told the simple story without much accuracy of chronology. In doing so I have not tried to exaggerate whatever I may possess in the way of virtues; neither have I tried to extenuate the many weaknesses and foibles that necessarily belong to me, in common with all other men of my acquaintance.

There has never been anything artificial in my life or character. I have lived a very natural and a very human sort of life. It has touched almost every phase of experience common to the lot of honest poverty and self-sacrificing endeavor. It has gone up against the rough angles, the struggles, the hardships, the disappointments, the rebuffs, the failures and the successes that attend the efforts of the self-made man.

I have had to become, from sheer necessity, the architect of my own position and character in the world; and in the process of my efforts I have learned many lessons of some value to those whose lot in life forces them along a similar line of personal development. I have had to fight some sort of opposi-

tion, some kind of obstruction, or some character of difficulty at every step of my progress. I owe nothing to fortune, to kindred or good luck; all that I am I owe to God and to the honest investment I have made of the health, the aspiration and the ability He has given me.

If I have accomplished anything in any sphere of human endeavor, I claim no special credit for it; I have simply tried to do my duty, though I am conscious of having fallen far short of my ideals.

Hence I have taken up more than half a century of life as I have lived it, and as I have seen it lived in others, and woven the result into the warp and woof of this volume.

It is a simple story, taken at a high temperature out of the furnace of a very intense experience.

The reader will find nothing mechanical or stilted in it; no effort at display, to attempt to pose as an artist in the use of my plot or pen; no exhibition of polished skill as an author; no high coloring of literary novelty; no innovation or side-light flashes for stage effect; no play to the applauding galleries, and no plea for immunity from the criticisms of those who may wish to condemn me.

It is the simple unfolding of an earnest life, with its touches of humor and pathos, for the encouragement of struggling young men and for the entertainment and diversion of those in mature life who may chance to scan these pages.

G. C. RANKIN.

Dallas, Texas, June the First, Nineteen Twelve.

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The Story of My Life



CHAPTER I

Pen Sketch of My Ancestry and Childhood

My father's name was Creed W. Rankin, and my mother's maiden name was Martha J. Clark. The former was born in Jefferson County and the latter in Cocke County, East Tennessee. The two counties were separated by the beautiful French Broad River. Dandridge was the county-seat of Jefferson and Newport the county-seat of Cocke. In that day they were far-in country towns, and both of them located on the river, but several miles apart.

My father was the son of Thomas W. Rankin, and in his early life the latter was a hatter by trade, but afterwards a farmer. He lived two miles from Dandridge. He was of sturdy pioneer stock, with a mixture of Scotch and Irish blood in his veins. In his young manhood he served in the army with old Hickory Jackson, and he was in the battle with the Indians at Horseshoe Bend, along with Sam Houston, another noted character.

In my boyhood I used to hear the old gentleman relate his experiences in that famous battle; how the Indians were fortified behind breastworks reaching across the bend of the river, with nothing on either side and in the rear of them except the wide stream, and how with ladders in one hand and guns

in the other the soldiers charged them, and how the Indians fled and swam the river; but the most of them landed under a high cliff on the opposite side and were unable to scale the rocks and escape, and the soldier-marksmen picked them off one by one until not one was left to tell the tale.

He was sick at the time of the battle of New Orleans, and this was a cause of regret for the rest of his long life.

Squire Rankin was an old-time Whig, but he worshiped at the personal shrine of Andrew Jackson, and thought him the greatest warrior and statesman who had ever lived. When the grim old soldier ran for office, whether State or National, Squire Rankin waived his politics and supported him heartily. No man rejoiced more than he when the General was elected President of the United States and was installed at the White House. I have often heard him speak of that campaign and the excitement it provoked. Naturally he was on the opposite side, but when the political fortunes of old Hickory were at stake he stood by the General. He thought more of him personally than he did of Whiggery. He flung himself into it and was proud of the part he took in it locally. He never was able to figure out just how the General could have been elected without his aid and support.

In religion the old gentleman was a blue-stocking Presbyterian of the strictest type. He swallowed its doctrines in toto without a misgiving or a qualm of conscience. He doubted no feature of it; and while tolerant of the religious views of others, he was to the end of his life a stalwart Calvinist. He accepted it all and carried it out in spirit and in letter in his faith and life. He was one of the best men I ever knew. He was kind in his heart, affable in his manners, a Christian gentleman on all parts of the ground, but tenacious and uncompromising in his principles.

He was a well-informed man in history, general literature and current events. The Bible was his one book of unfailing interest, and he knew it and the Shorter Catechism memoriter. He was a close reader, and at odd times lived in his books and periodicals. He knew the great men of that day and past days. He could tell you all about them—and many of them he had seen, and knew them personally. Then, too, he was the soul of hospitality, and the leading preachers and prominent politicians used to stop at his comfortable country home. It was a treat to him to entertain them and talk with them. From them he learned much, and his face brightened whenever they called to spend the night with him. He had plenty of everything and gave them a royal welcome.

For years and years he was the Justice of the Peace of his precinct, and this is why he was called Squire Tommy Rankin. When the weather was good he would hold his court in his front yard under the trees, but when it was inclement he would hold it in his commodious workshop. But usually, if it were possible, he would get the contending parties together, lecture them on their duty as neighbors and prevail upon them to make friends and go home and live together peaceably. Often in this way he would have his prospective litigants settle their troubles. He did not know much book-law, but he had a keen sense of justice and knew what was right; and upon this principle he decided most of the cases that came before him. And he was rarely ever reversed, so he used to say. But it was often the case that there was no appeal from his settlement of those neighborhood troubles. He was known as a peacemaker, and no one ever questioned the old man's honesty and his inflexible purpose to do right.

His first wife was a devout Christian woman, with good mind and a lofty spirit, but she died when my father was still

quite a boy. This was always a source of sorrow to him, as he spoke in terms of great reverence of her.

My mother's father was named Shelton Clark. He was a farmer by occupation and owned negroes and a fine plantation. His large framed house was on the "big road", and it was known far and wide as a place of great hospitality. His barn was always full, his crib replete with cereals, his smokehouse well supplied with meat, and his table groaned under the weight of the best that the farm could supply. He was a man of great common sense, well poised in character, strong and robust in body, and very industrious. And while strictly moral, he was not a professor of religion, neither was he a member of the Church; but all the pioneer preachers of that day had a welcome in his home. He was Irish in his race and temperament. He was a quiet man in his disposition, but he was as courageous as a lion; and when aroused he was not a safe man to encounter. He was not an educated man, but he was possessed of a strong native mind and had great strength of character.

His good wife was one of the best women I have ever known. She was also of Irish descent, rather low and stout, had a striking face, red hair intermingled with gray; when I first knew her she was a shouting Methodist, and the best old grandmother in the world. Her husband died and left her with a large family of children to raise, quite a number of negroes to manage, and an estate to look after. All this she did well and made a success of her undertaking. Her dear old face stands out before me now just as it did in the years long gone, and I esteem her affection for me as one of the dearest boons of my young life. To me it was heaven to spend days and weeks with her and enjoy her love and companionship.

Were it necessary I could go much further back in my ancestral history; but the above will suffice. I have always rejoiced in the fact that on both my paternal and maternal side of the house I have inherited qualities of blood and brawn of which I am justly proud. If anything dishonorable ever occurred in the family record back through the history along which I have been able to trace my origin, I have not been able to discover it. Through the several generations where I have made the search I have found them to be industrious, law-abiding and upright people, and among them are found scores of men and women of more than ordinary intellectual endowments, high moral ideals and prominent leaders in Church and State. If I was not well born it was not the fault of my ancestors.

My father was far more than an ordinary man. For his day he was well educated. He had a well-selected library, and he was an ardent lover of good books. He patronized some of the best periodicals of that day. He was studious and a well-informed man. By vocation he was a farmer and managed the large plantation interests of his wealthy uncle, Major Lawson D. Franklin. On that plantation there were several hundred slaves, and he took a large part in directing their labors and controlling their conduct. At times some of them were vicious and had to be handled roughly. In person he was more than six feet tall, had a splendid head covered with coal-black hair, a striking face lit up with a bluish-gray eye of wondrous penetration, and his general bearing was that of a man born to command. He had great pride of character, dressed well, and he was a leader in the community where he lived. He was a man of impulsive spirit, did not take well to unreasonable opposition, and when angered his temper was of

an explosive character. The man who wantonly insulted him had need to get ready for business on very short notice.

My father, in religion, was a Presbyterian, and a member of that denomination. However, he was not a devoutly religious man, but a very respectable communicant of the Church. He was devoted to the externals of religion, believed in its truth and patronized its enterprises; but he was lacking in the more deeply spiritual experiences of religion. The intellectual by far dominated the emotional in his moral and religious bent of mind and character. He was the friend of all ministers and delighted to entertain them in his home. There was no Church of his denomination in our immediate community, and he mostly attended services at the Methodist Church with my mother; and he was a very close listener to the sermon.

He was a popular man among the people who knew him, and often he was called into the counsel of his wide circle of friends. He was a devoted member of the Masonic fraternity and rarely ever missed his lodge meetings. He filled its highest offices. He was elected Colonel of the county militia and gave a great deal of thought to military matters. Hence he was known throughout his section as Colonel Rankin. He had a brilliant uniform in keeping with his rank, and when in full dress and mounted upon his splendid steed he looked every inch like a military chieftain. My mother was very proud of him, and as a boy I thought him the greatest living man. He was courtly in his manner and picturesque in his character.

My mother was a supremely modest woman. She was of medium size, had auburn hair, soft-gray eyes and a face of subdued sweetness and saintly expression. If she ever had a coarse thought there was no mark of it in her countenance. She had but very limited education, but she was a close ob-

server and a persistent student of the Scriptures. She was possessed of a large degree of innate refinement. From early life she had her share of sorrow, and its effect upon her life and character matured her into the ripeness of a very deep religious faith. She was a Methodist of the old-fashioned type, and there was a profound spirituality in her experience. She accepted the teachings of the Bible without any question or misgiving. If she ever had a doubt as to its inspiration and authenticity I never heard her give the slightest expression to it. In fact, I think she accepted the Scriptures just as though God had opened the door of heaven and handed a copy of them to her with his own hand. To her it was God's own word and its commands were yea and amen.

She never missed Church service whenever it was within her reach; and she went to listen, to learn, to be benefited. God's house was to her a veritable sanctuary, its pulpit was her oracle, its altars were heaven's shrine. Often she would become filled to overflowing with divine unction, and more than once I have heard her sweet, clear voice in outbursts of praise and glad hallelujahs. But hers was not simply a Church religion; it was a uniform, ever-flowing, perennial religion. In her home she had her special place for private prayer and there at special hours she would talk with God. Many a time have I heard her softly-whispered ejaculations as she communed with her unseen though ever-present Father. Her life was an illustration of her faith and her neighbors took knowledge of her that she had been with Jesus.

She was a model of patience and never gave way to anger. She could bear more and resent less than any woman I have ever known. She was a paragon of industry. She could spin, weave, cut and make her clothing, and that of her husband and children, and when the product left her hand an expert

tailor could hardly have made any improvement on it. She was an admirable cook and knew how to supply her table with things good and palatable. And with the voice of song she went about her work as happy as the child of God. In much of her latter life she was in poor health, and at times her weak body would cast a spirit of gloom over her mellow face; but in the main she was buoyant and hopeful. I shall have much more to say about her in several chapters to follow; thus far I have only indicated her traits and qualities in order that the reader may know something of the heritage of my birth.

My father and mother were married at the home of her mother after a lengthy courtship, as I have heard her relate time and again. They at once went to housekeeping in a home he had prepared in Jefferson County two miles from the town of Dandridge. In front of their home ran the limpid French Broad River, whose banks were fringed with birch and willow, and whose rippling waters were as clear as crystal. Just beyond the stream there stretched a magnificent piece of rich bottom land to the foot of an irregular mountain range whose peaks seemed to kiss the overarching sky. Back of the home were undulating hills, covered with a luxuriant forest, in the branches of which the wild birds sang by day and the somber whip-poor-wills chanted their weird melodies by night. Amid these romantic surroundings, with every touch of rural beauty and attractiveness, nestled the comfortable home in which their wedded life had its peaceful beginning. Material wealth was not their possession, but they had plenty with which to begin, and they were rich in the wealth of their love and in the prospect of a life of happiness and inspiration. The whole surrounding made it the fit habitation for love's young dream, and no wedded couple ever entered upon their united career with brighter prospects and with more glowing

anticipations. Hope regaled their experiences with creations of pleasure and held before them pictures of enchantment and fortune. Thus they settled down to the realities of domestic life and addressed themselves at once to the duties of their new relationship as husband and wife.

My birth and early life have some points of interest in this connection. I was neither the first nor the second-born in that quiet little home beside the swiftly-flowing river. The first to come was a baby girl, bright and promising. Around her my mother's affections clustered, and she was the light of her life. But before her conscious little eyes rested upon the strange world into which she had come, and just after she had made her presence indispensable to my mother's happiness, the angels came one dark, murky night and kissed her innocent spirit away. Her body was deposited on the hilltop not far off, the first spot to greet the sun in the morning and the last to bid him adieu at eventide. The little cradle sat silent and vacant in its accustomed place. This was the first sorrow that flung its dark shadow athwart the threshold of that home, and it left behind it a trail of maternal anguish. Thus, right in the beginning of her domestic experience, my mother was made to realize the bitter meaning of death. For months she was desolate. Often, toward the close of day, she would wend her saddened footsteps to that sunkissed mound and look up through her tears, wondering why the good Father had bereft her and left her sad and lonely. She was not rebellious, but the why of it was a pathetic puzzle to her faith.

In the course of time another dear little baby girl appeared in that home, and the look of sadness upon my mother's face gave place to that of joy and gladness. She did not forget the first-born, but the second was in some measure a recompense for the loss her heart had sustained. Life again took



on hope and the future brightened in its expanse before her. But those glad smiles were soon destined to recede under another shadow, and the fitful light again faded into darkness; for when the cup of her delight was just about full the spirit of this smiling angel in human form took its flight to the land beyond. Then, instead of one, there were two little graves on the vernal hill, and my mother's heart was almost buried in the tiny vaults that marked the sacred spot.

The heart is human, however strong its faith and however resigned to its mysterious fate. It cannot help bleeding when repeatedly bruised and torn. She was not in the least resentful. Her trust was unshaken, but the unknown purpose in the untoward visitations made her wonder why she was thus smitten. But day by day she went to the Father above for strength and guidance, and strove to cling the closer to the arm that seemed to ply the chastening rod. Often I used to hear her tell of her grief in those early days and, by and by, how she became reconciled to a merciful Providence in his strange dealings with her. She heard a voice whispering to her: "What I do now thou knowest not, but thou shalt know hereafter." She ceased to think of her loved and lost as sleeping on the hilltop, but as living a conscious life with God.

It was under these circumstances of striving to bring herself into perfect subjection to the will of the Father, and when her deeper consecration to him became the inspiration of her life, that I was born into the home. My first breath was, therefore, in the atmosphere of faith in God's providence and increased devotion to his service. Yea, my prenatal life was conceived and nurtured by her at a time when her faith was keenest and when her reliance upon divine strength was greatest. I came into the world through the heart-sobs of prayer; and she regarded my advent as God's own gift to her;



MRS. MARTHA J. RANKIN
MY MOTHER



and she was happy and glad in the possession. Yes, I had a royal welcome into this hard old world. I was needed to fill up the measure of craving in a soul twice smitten and as the reward of a faith that no sort of sorrow could sweep from its anchorage.

How fortunate to be thus born! As a result, I cannot remember when I was not religiously inclined. My nature was bent that way, and my earliest thought dwelt upon God instinctively. My recollection does not reach back to the time I first prayed at my mother's knee. Her faith, in a certain sense, was my faith and her God was my God. Like her, in my early childhood I was a stranger to doubt. The Good Man, as my mother would present God to me, was a reality from the beginning; and heaven was as common to my early thinking as was the home in which I lived. I did not regard my little sisters as dead, and when my mother would lead me by the hand to their resting-place, she told me they only went that way to the better land. I believed it with all my innocent heart. What a delightful condition of soul when no doubt drags its ugly form across the pathway of faith! Later on in life I had the spell of this absolute trustfulness rudely broken and it gave me the shock of my life. I passed through struggle and conflict during many disturbed nights and weary days before I recovered my bearing; and when the recovery was realized my soul was bruised and torn, some of the scars of which remain until this good day.

Consecrated motherhood is the best and most valuable boon in the life of a boy. It is the Angel of the Covenant whose influence goes with him from the beginning to the close of his earthly pilgrimage. However far he may drift in after-life from the lessons of his childhood, ever and anon he awakes to the consciousness of the fact that right there in the far-off

background of his memory stands his mother looking wistfully and tenderly into his face. Her purity of life he can never cease to revere, and he can never free himself from the touch of her long-vanished hand. When all other comforts flee and other helpers cease, the fancied sound of her silent voice continues to sink like sacred music in his throbbing heart. He can never forget her prayer, her counsel, her godly admonition.

From my first recollection my mother treated me more like a companion than a child. Rather, she treated me more like her second self. Whether she bent over the garment with her needle in hand, or walked back and forth at her revolving spinning-wheel, or sent the shuttle singing through the warp of the resounding loom, or stooped over the washtub on the early Monday morning, or went quietly about the noonday meal, she was never too busy or tired to hold converse with me. She had a sweet voice of singular clearness and often she would sing the songs of Zion to me. They were the old songs that she sang, nearly all of which are obsolete now. They were songs of pathetic strain and tune, rich in minor melodies. Her early sorrows inclined her thought and feeling that way and the soft stop played a large part in her music, her devotion, her thinking and her manner of conversation.

I loved my father, of course, and had great respect for him, but not in the same way that I loved my mother. He was busy here and there with the affairs of life and my constant noise and prattle did not always appeal to him as it did to her. I held him in a sort of awe as he would come and go; but I felt as easy and restful in my mother's presence as a birdling in its sheltering nest. She opened her heart to me and I entered into it as my door of hope and confidence. My talk and questionings, though interminable, never seemed to weary or worry her in the least.

CHAPTER II

Some Early Incidents I Well Remember

When I was about five years old my grandmother came down to see us one day. This she often did, and it was always an event in our home. I noticed on this occasion that she and my mother were in very close whispered conversation just before she was ready to return home. Then she turned to me and said she wanted me to go home with her and spend a few days, that Jack wanted to see me, and that she had cake and sugar and other good things for me. Of course I was ready to accede to her proposition, for it was always a treat to visit her home. So she mounted old Rufe, her trusted old saddle-horse, my father threw me on behind her, and away we racked to grandma's house. When we arrived Jack was at the gate to receive us, which he did with many antics of delight.

She had an old trusted negro woman named Aunt Dinny, and no kinder heart ever beat in a human bosom. She was an old black mammy to me. In fact, she never showed any difference in her affection between Jack and me. Jack was her youngest child and he was three years older than I, and he was the inseparable chum of my early childhood. The boy who never had a country grandma, who never had an old black mammy, and who never had a little negro chum will never

know what he has missed; and whether living or dead, he still has a great deal coming to him. It was my good fortune to enjoy these three blessings. The memory of them is still precious to me, and I often revert to them and find joy in their recollection.

Jack was strongly attached to me. He really loved he like a little brother. He was a funny-looking little negro. He had a catfish mouth filled with white teeth, a flat nose, large lips, a small head covered with short kinky hair, tall and slender, and was as black as the ace of spades. In fact, as I afterwards learned, he was gawky and angular and a grotesque speciment of humanity. But at that time .I saw no physical defect in his personal make-up. He was my beau-ideal. My freedom about the "big house" as the only white child gave me access to all the good things, and Jack was monstrously fond of goodies. Of course he loved me. And he was ready at a moment's notice to render me any sort of service.

As a result, he would do anything for me, and nothing really pleased him more than my visits to grandma's. As soon as I arrived he would run, jump, turn somersaults and cut all sorts of capers. There was nothing that he would not do for me. He would get down on his all-fours and let me ride him about the room, and he would improvise a harness and hitch himself to a little wagon and pull me all about the premises. He would sometimes mount the rungs of a ladder and skin cats by the half hour to my delight, and do divers other things for my amusement. So, on this particular visit, Jack was ready to receive me and he gave me a boisterous welcome. For a week I had the time of my life and was perfectly satisfied. Once or twice grandma slipped down to see mother without letting me know where she had gone.

But early one morning she had Uncle Martin to saddle old

Rufe and told me to tell Jack good-bye, for she was going to take me home to see mother. Off we paced, and in a couple of hours we were there and I rushed in to see mother. I was surprised to find her in bed, but I ran up to where she was and she drew me to her and kissed me. Then she threw back the cover and told me to see what Dr. Crawford had brought me. I looked, and there lay a tiny little baby brother! My astonishment staggered me, and my curiosity ran up to fever heat. I began to ask mother a hundred questions about that youngster, and it was many a day before my curiosity subsided. But I was overjoyed at the accession. But the coming of a new baby to the home to this good day makes about the same impression on the children. How fortunate that this is true! The little strangers are not responsible for their advent into this world and they are entitled to a welcome.

But my mother was a long time fully recovering and when she did it was only partial. She was almost an invalid for two years or more. As a result, I spent the most of that time at grandma's, with an occasional visit home. Her house became a sort of second home to me. She gave me every liberty, and no boy ever had a happier time. The preachers would often stop there, and once a month she would have public service in her house. They were a companionable class of men and always had a kind word for me. Grandma always told them that I was her little preacher, and it pleased me immensely. At these services the negroes were allowed to attend and to participate. She had one old man who was mighty in prayer and occasionally he was called on to lead, and he did it with fervor. They all joined in the singing, and I have never heard such Church music since that day.

Grandma was kind to her negroes. She clothed them well, taught them to read, and they lived as well as the white folks.

She permitted them to have little patches of stuff of their own, a few pigs and some chickens. Hence they usually had their own change; and, in fact, they were better off than any of them were afterwards, when they were set free. She never sold one, but more than once she bought a man or a woman in order to unite their families. From time to time, as she grew older and her children married, she would give each one his or her proportionate number of negroes. Some of her children did not do as good a part by them as she did.

Among them all Aunt Dinny and Jack were my pick and choice. She was so kind and motherly, and Jack was my second self. Now and then, at night, after she had cleared off the supper table, washed the dishes and put them away, she would take me into her big warm arms, call Jack and go down to her cabin, two hundred yards below the "big house". It was always a pleasure to go down there and hear her talk and tell stories. She would often gather the pickaninnies around her, and for an hour tell some of the most startling things about "ghosts, hants, hobgoblins and raw heads and bloody bones" that ever fell upon childish ears. One who never heard the old negroes tell these stories can scarcely realize what it meant on those occasions. Negroes were then very superstitious and they believed in "spooks" with all their sincerity. Aunt Dinny believed in them as much as she believed in the gospel. And she made me believe in them, too. While she would tell of the doings of the ghosts and "hants" my hair would stand on end and the cold rigors would run up and down my spine. For she would often illustrate the performances of these uncanny things by her facial expressions, her peculiar noises and her bodily contortions. It was something frightful! I could imagine that I saw the "spirits" flitting about me with their hollow eyes and pale faces.

I actually accepted these stories as the simple truth. They were realities to my childish mind and heart. Aunt Dinny said she had seen them and that was all the proof I desired. And once in awhile I would see them, too! We invariably see the things for which we are looking, for we largely make up the world of feeling and imagination in which we live. I will give you one example. Two miles up the road from grandma's there was a place called "Dug Holler." It was a place a quarter of a mile long, where the road went between the points of two declining hills, and this part of it had been dug out so as to make it a level road. Hence its name. On either side the hills gradually rose high, and toward evening this "Dug Holler" was somber and shadowy. Particularly was this true on a damp, cloudy evening. According to an old tradition of the negroes, "Dug Holler" was haunted, and they usually gave it a wide berth after sundown.

As the story ran, it was said that at some time in the long ago, one cold, drizzly evening just after sundown, a man was riding through there on a gray horse and he was murdered. And on every similar evening about the same time he always appeared there on the side of the road without any head, galloping that gray horse and making fearful noises. He was a holy terror. It so happened one day, in my boyhood life, that I had to go to mill on old Rufe and I was detained longer than I had calculated. I finally got my grist and started home But it was about dark and the evening was cool and drizzly, just such a night when that haunt was said to materialize. I had to pass through the place, for there was no way around it. As I came up to its approach and looked into the gloom before me, my heart leaped to my mouth and the cold sweat broke out on me. I mustered all the courage possible, put the lash under Rufe's flank, and made the dash like a cyclone! We

were fairly burning the wind and his old feet were beating a gay tune as they hit the ground. I had not gone far into the "holler" until I heard the brush crack above me on the side of the hill and I glanced round to see what it was. To my horror there galloped the white horse with the headless man on him, and his groans were unearthly! I shut my eyes tightly, flung the lash that much harder under old Rufe's sides, and the old horse only touched the earth in high places. By and by I emerged at the opposite end, but the quirt did not stop its operations until I halted at the yard gate at grandma's. He was panting like a steam locomotive and there was not a dry hair on his old body.

It was not long until the negroes were gathered round me listening to my blood and thunder adventure. They grew very much excited as I related the details of my experience, and once in awhile they would chime in with: "I tole you so! Dat chile's tellin' de trufe. I seed de same thing wid my own eyes." And they would shake their heads, swing their bodies, and look in the most significant way at each other. I was a veritable hero, and I rather enjoyed it; but I am sure that old Rufe got no pleasure out of the performance. However, that experience satisfied me, and you can lay down your bottom penny that I never again went through "Dug Holler" after nightfall, it made no difference whether it was a drizzly evening or a moonlit night! There is no doubt that I saw the ghost. I went in there to see it and I was not disappointed.

The influence of those old ghost stories has followed me to this day. I still have a suspicious dread of going through dismal places after night. I do not enjoy, under such circumstances, hearing strange and hideous noises. It always gives me the shivers. I would rather walk a mile out of my way any time after night than go by a graveyard. When I have

to pass such a place at night I always quicken my pace and my pulse becomes uncomfortable. I do not like to see the new moon in its changes for the first time through the branches of a tree. When it so happens I find myself unconsciously going through some mental gyrations akin to the bodily ones that I performed when I was a boy. When I start on a journey and a rabbit crosses the road in front of me my first impulse is to turn around, make a cross in the road and spit over my left shoulder at it, because Aunt Dinny always told me it was bad luck not to do it. Yet I am not superstitious! I do not believe in ghosts and hants, except such as I create in my own imagination. I know that no such things exist. But the effect of those old negro folklore stories lodged in my subconsciousness at a time when I did believe in them; and despite my intelligence the law of suggestion sometimes, under favorable circumstances, throws the spell of those old stories over me and I have the rigors. You need not laugh at me, for nearly all people feel queer when they pass a lonely way and some one jumps out and shouts "Spooks!"

Children are very imitative creatures. They do what they see their parents or older people do. Jack and myself were adepts at this sort of business. We were observant and took pleasure in reproducing the incidents of older people. One night I had the earache. Grandma saturated a bunch of cotton with sweet oil and put it in my ear, but it did not relieve me. So she cut the leg off of an old sock, filled it with warm ashes and laid that on my ear and the pain subsided. A few days after that grandma was taken sick and the old family doctor came to see her. He sat down by her bed, looked at her tongue and felt her pulse. He threw his saddlebags across his knee and took out a vial with powders in it. He took some strips of paper, poured some of the powders on each, rolled them up

and crimped the ends and left directions how to give them. Grandma soon recovered.

After that, one morning, Aunt Dinny was down at the cowgap, and Jack and myself were in the kitchen by the fire. Jack suggested that we play sick man and doctor. He was the sick man and I was the doctor. He stretched himself on a short bench and I seated myself by him. I looked at his tongue, felt his pulse and with an old pewter spoon I shoveled up some flour, poured it on some slips of paper and crimped their ends; for we had sat interestingly by and saw old Doctor Moore do the same thing when grandma was sick. I administered a few doses and soon had him on his feet. Then I suggested that he have an attack of earache, and soon he was lying prone upon the bench groaning for dear life. I took a wad of cotton, dipped it into a plate of gravy and soused it into his ear. But this did not relieve him. I did not have the sock leg, so I plunged the spoon into what I thought was a bed of warm ashes and poured them in on the cotton.

Then something happened, and it happened quickly. Jack sprang from the bench with the agility of a gray squirrel, knocked over a stack of soiled dishes and shattered them as they fell, darted through the door like a streak of lightning and disappeared through the orchard gate like a disembodied spirit, yelling at the top of his voice! Grandma came rushing from the sitting-room, Uncle Martin ran around the house from the woodpile, and next, Aunt Dinny appeared from the cowgap in time to see the hole that Jack cauterized in the air, and they gave chase. Uncle Martin was the fleetest of foot and he soon ran Jack down and brought him to bay. Grandma was next, and then Aunt Dinny, and Jack was still emitting hideous yells. Grandma cried out to him to know what in the world was the matter! With the big tears running down his

black cheeks, he finally caught his breath and said between sobs: "We was a playin' sick man and Doctor, and Goge po'd hot ashes in my yar." Grandma jerked his hand down and saw the smoking cotton and gravy, and hastened to gouge it out. While the rim of his ear was slightly blistered, no serious damage was done, because the cotton had protected the ear. In the meantime I had run upstairs and crawled under the bed, for I was frightened worse than Jack. I thought I had killed him, and I was crying lustily. And as I heard them coming through the gate with Jack, and listened to his sobs, I set up even a louder howl. Jack soon told them in detail how the catastrophe had occurred, and when they saw that no serious hurt had been done, they all had a big laugh. But there was no laugh for Jack and there was none for me. To both of us it was a serious affair. Aunt Dinny heard my cries and she rushed upstairs, looked under the bed and said: "Law massie, chile! Jack ain't hurt. You come right out heah to yo Aunt Dinny and we'll go and see Jack." I came out and she went down with me and there was poor Jack looking a most forlorn sight. He looked up at me and said: "Yo' didn't know dem ashes was hot, did yo', Goge?" It was not long until Jack was well supplied with cake and maple sugar from grandma's sideboard; but I never did again practice medicine on Jack for the earache.

While I am writing about Jack I will skip over three or four years and relate a final incident concerning him and myself. Grandma gave Jack to her youngest son and he became involved in debt. So he determined to sell the boy in order to meet his obligations. Grandma did her utmost in the way of protest and importunity, but it did no good. He had made up his mind that the sale had to be consummated and he would listen to neither argument nor appeal. It frequently



Jack, My Little Negro Chum.

occurred in those days that such sales were made to negro traders for purposes of speculation. This was the nightmare of the negroes, for when they fell into such hands they were driven off and sold to cotton planters down South and they were never more heard of. So my young uncle satisfied his conscience by telling grandma that he would not think of selling Jack to speculators who would send him far away, but that he would let a man only a few miles away, by the name of Andy Ramsey, have him and this would keep him near his mother.

Grandma had to break the news to Aunt Dinny and it was something that she greatly dreaded, for she was very much attached to her old servant and it would pain her to witness her grief. She put it off until the afternoon before Ramsey was to come after Jack; and then she went to her little cabin and as delicately as possible told her of what was going to happen. I shall never forget the agonizing cry that came from her old husky throat when it dawned on her that Jack was already sold and would have to leave the next morning. Jack and myself were playing in the yard and we heard the cry, but did not know what it meant. I followed grandma back to the "big house" and Jack went to his mamma's cabin. I begged grandma to tell me what was the matter and when she told me I was stunned. In the meantime Aunt Dinny had taken Jack into her arms and told him. I went out to the cabin to mingle my tears with theirs, but Jack was nowhere to be seen. I went to the yard, for I heard his voice in lamentation. And there in the chimney corner, with his face turned to the cold bricks, stood Jack sobbing most piteously. I went up to him and put my head against him and we cried ourselves almost sick. That was late in the evening, and the next morning Ramsey was to come after him.

To me and to Jack that was a sorrowful night. Grandma tried to comfort Aunt Dinny, but there was no comfort for her. It was like Rachel weeping for her children because they were not. True, she was an old black woman, with no sort of education; but she had a heart and it was bleeding. Then and there it dawned on me that Jack was a slave and could be sold just like a horse or a cow. I could not understand it, for until then it had never occurred to me that my chum was not as free as myself. It was late before I went to sleep, and by morning I had come to the conclusion that my uncle was about the meanest man upon the earth. But he was not. It was one of the customs of the age, and usually it was common, as I afterwards learned. Poor Jack was the victim of an evil, though a lawful institution. But in my young heart I learned to hate it, because of its effect upon Jack and Aunt Dinny.

Nine o'clock arrived, but Ramsey had not come. I hoped that he had died during the night and that he would never come. But after awhile I gazed down the road and saw him coming over the hill on his gray horse. My heart sank within me. Jack saw him, too, and he ran crying down to his mamma's cabin, threw himself into her arms and begged her not to let the man take him. She tried to comfort him, but there was no comfort in her own poor old heart, and she could impart none to the ignorant little black boy. Ramsey went down and got him and spoke kindly to him, telling him he would let him come back occasionally to see his old mammy. He took him up behind him and rode away, and I watched him as far as I could see him and when he disappeared from view I buried my head in grandma's lap and sobbed myself into hysterics. And grandma cried, too, for she was a very tender-hearted woman.

For days I did not know what to do with myself. I would start up at times and it seemed that I could see Jack around the house; then again I imagined that I could hear his voice calling me. But it was only a dream. He was gone and I was sad and lonely. I could not think of Jack without bursting into tears, and poor old Aunt Dinny never did get over the shock. She brooded over her loss until she became melancholy. I never again saw a smile on her face. She pined away and finally died of a broken heart. These two events, the sale of Jack and the death of Aunt Dinny, made up the sum total of my boyhood sorrow. To that date I had known none. But these two black people had so intertwined themselves with my life that they had become a part of it, and I was incomplete without them. I was the only white child about grandma's place and, except her, Aunt Dinny and Jack were my sole companions. Now they were gone and grandma's was no longer like home to me. It became the lonesomest place in the world to me.

Slavery, as grandma conducted it, was not an evil. She and her negroes were like one great family. She trusted them and they rarely ever disobeyed or deceived her. They knew her so well and she knew them so well that her wish was their law. She managed them like a wise mother manages her children. But the abuses of slavery rendered it an odious institution. When it made goods and chattels out of husbands and wives and children, it became brutal. But Southern people were not responsible for the evil. Northern people first brought them from their native Africa, or bought them from those who did bring them by ship to this country. But the Northern climate was not adapted to them; and they were not adapted to Northern industry. The slave was adapted to a warm climate and to plantation life. Hence the Northern

people soon realized this and shipped them South and sold them to Southern people. As they multiplied they became more useful on farms and public utilities; and after the cotton gin was invented the negro became indispensable to the South.

Greed then got in its work and gradually slavery degenerated into an evil both to the negroes and to the Southern people. And out of it grew the bloodiest civil revolution that ever shocked the moral sense of the world.

In the impact of that revolution slavery died, but with its death the soil of our country was washed in the blood of multiplied thousands of the bravest men that ever drew a sword upon the field of battle. As an institution it is dead and gone forever, and the old-time Southern slave, the very best type of the negro race, is very nearly extinct today. A new generation of negroes, as freemen, has come upon the scene of action; and our children now have but a faint idea of what slavery was, or of the old-time negro slave. But those of us who lived back in those days, and had warm attachments for the old black mammy and her angular black boy, often live amid the memories of those extinct associations, and we cherish them as the happiess recollections of life.

I have thrown this chapter into this book that this generation of our children may have some insight into the relations and cherished friendships of a condition of things now gone forever. I sometimes feel sad when I dwell upon these memories. I indulge the hope that some sweet day, when I cross the borderland where colors and distinctions are unknown and where God is the Father of us all, in some way I will meet Aunt Dinny and Jack under skies that never become clouded, amid landscapes where the frost never falls, and beside silvery streams that flow on forever.

CHAPTER III

An Old-Time Election in East Tennessee, and Else

In the earlier days, long before the railroads ran through that section, East Tennessee was a country to itself. Its topography made it such. Its people were a peculiar people—rugged, honest and unique. I doubt if their kind was ever known under other circumstances. Hundreds of them were well-to-do, and now and then, in the more fertile communities, there was actual wealth. Especially was this true along the beautiful water-courses where the farm lands are unequaled, even to this good day.

Among them were people of intelligence and high ideals. No country could boast of a finer grade of men and women than lived and flourished in portions of that "Switzerland of America." Their ministers and lawyers and politicians were men of unusual talent. Some of the most eloquent men produced in the United States were born and flourished in East Tennessee.

Those evergreen hills and sun-tipped mountains, covered with a verdant forest in summer and gorgeously decorated with every variety of autumnal hue in the fall and winter; those foaming rivers and leaping cascades; the scream of the eagle by day and the weird hoot of the owl by night—all these natural environments conspired to make men hardy and their

speech pictorial and romantic. As a result, there were among them men of native eloquence, veritable sons of thunder in the pulpit, before the bar, and on the hustings.

But far back from these better advantages of soil and institutions of learning, in the gorges, on the hills, along the ravines and amid the mountains, the great throbbing masses of the people were of a different type and belonged almost to another civilization. They were rugged, natural and picturesque. With exceptions, they were not people of books; they did not know the art of letters; they were simple, crude, sincere and physically brave. They enjoyed the freedom of the hills, the shadows of the rocks and the grandeur of the mountains. They were a robust set of men and women, whose dress was mostly homespun, whose muscles were tough, whose countenances were swarthy, and whose rifles were their defense. They took an interest in whatever transpired in their own localities and in the more favored sections of their more fortunate neighbors. They were social, and practiced the law of reciprocity long before Uncle Sam tried to establish it between this country and Canada.

Who among us, having lived in that garden spot of the world, can ever forget the old-fashioned house-raisings, the rough and tumble log-rollings, the frosty corn-shuckings, the road-workings and the quilting-bees?

And when the day's work was over—then the supper—after that the fiddle and the bow, and the old Virginia reel. None but a registered East Tennessean, in his memory, can do justice to experiences like those. No such things ever happened in just that way anywhere on the face of the earth except in that land of the skies.

Therefore, the man who even thinks of those East Tennesseans as sluggards and ignoramuses who got nothing out of

life is wide of the mark. They had sense of the horse kind; and they were people of good though crude morals. No such thing as a divorce was known among them. It was rare that one of them ever went to jail in our section; and, if he did, he was disgraced for life.

I never knew, in my boyhood, of but one man going to the penitentiary and it was a shock to the whole country. While they had their stills, made their own brandy, and did pretty much as they pleased, yet in the main they were orderly and law-abiding.

They were all born politicians and took the profoundest interest in the elections. They depended largely for their ideas of politics upon the politicians of that day who often passed through the country and entertained them with speaking. They would drop everything in order to hear some leading man speak, and they were very evenly divided between the Whigs and the Democrats. Leading men of that day, in times of great political excitement, would visit our locality and have all-day speakings. They would have great barbecues and joint discussions. Men like Andrew Johnson, Nat G. Taylor, Landon C. Haynes, Thomas A. R. Nelson, W. G. Brownlow, Colonel John Netherland, and men of lesser note, were familiar characters on the hustings. I doubt if men of greater ability on the platform than these could be found in any State in the Union. They were well trained in the arts of public speech and their eloquence was of the passionate and fiery character, and they often lashed their respective followings into the wildest excitement.

I have witnessed political upheavals, under the oratory of those spellbinders, almost like a storm upon the bosom of an angry ocean. Therefore, people in those hills and mountains and valleys, sitting under the teachings of such leaders as

those of that day, were not ignorant of the politics of their times. Even if many of them were ignorant of books and papers, and if hundreds of them never ventured across the borderline of their own counties, they were all apprised of what was going on in the great political world of their day. They learned from the living sources of wisdom, for they had the advantages of the most eloquent expounders of Democracy and Whiggery that the world afforded. The most stupid looking hill-billie, and the veriest hairy-legged old mountaineer both knew why he was a Democrat and why he was a Whig.

Yes, the native East Tennessean has always been a well-informed man on the political issues of the day.

Now I am sure that after these explanatory remarks the reader is prepared to appreciate my description of an old-time election in East Tennessee. It was held in a cabin in one corner of the yard surrounding my grandma's home. It involved both National and State issues, and its local features added to the interest. No such scenes are possible today as I witnessed on that occasion. In fact, I doubt if they ever did occur anywhere else except in that mountain region. Even there they have become memories, but they are memories rare and worth repeating.

It was on a cold drizzly day in November. The country for months had been wrought into a frenzy of interest and the party lines were tightly drawn. The hills and the mountains disgorged themselves and the place was alive with the most original class of men ever gathered at the polls. They were there early and they remained until late. They kept coming, and no one left; and by noon you could scarcely stir them with a stick.

I was seated at the window in my grandma's front room

looking at them. Just to the right of the voting place, roped off to itself, were the Whig headquarters. Near by it was a barrel turned up on end with the head knocked in and three or four long-handled gourds were hanging down in the contents. It was homemade apple brandy. About the same distance to the left the Democrats had their rallying point similarly hedged in, and in the center the same sort of a barrel with the same long-handled gourds. To those in sympathy with each party thus represented these refreshments were as free as the water in the stream near by. There were no election laws or officious officers to interfere with their enjoyment. They were the freest and easiest-going lot upon which my eyes ever gazed. The leaders and the workers were busy, and when they would succeed in voting some man their way a great shout would rend the air.

Along toward noon many of them were under a heavy head of steam and they were feeling their keeping. Then it was that the fun began. One stern old hill-billie, with jean-pants and coat on, and an old hat through the top of which his hair was waving in the wind, became very boisterous. It took two or three of his friends to hold him. By and by he broke away from them and rushed out into the big road, and it was red clay and muddy. He threw his old hat up in the air, jerked off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, spit on his hands and shook himself vigorously. He swore that he was Andy Johnson's jack and that the crowd had no "blanked" Whig that could comb his mane. And then he swaggered round and brayed like a wild ass of the desert. The Whigs looked on for a moment, and then an old mountaineer threw off his coat, exposing a hairy breast, jumped three feet high and cracked his heels together like two clapboards, and vowed that he was the "chap what could curry that jack."

The Whigs gathered around their man and the Democrats about theirs, and preparations for the trial of strength were soon in operation. They made a big ring in the mud, adopted a few simple regulations, put the two combatants in it, and then shouted: "Stand back, everybody, and gim'um a chance!" The two bullies, well tanked up, went at each other after the manner of a hammer-and-tongs and fist-and-skull fashion. But they were too tipsy to do each other serious injury and they were given uninterrupted scope. They grappled like two clumsy grizzlies. They scratched, they punched, they bit, they pulled hair, and they growled most ferociously. Round and round they butted and pushed, until they were well-nigh exhausted. The crowd stood around and cheered, alternately, as each side received encouragement. But it became apparent that the old mountaineer was outwinding the hill-billie, and finally the latter went down in a heap with the former on top, with his thumbs in his opponent's eyes. It was soon all over, and the bottom man cried out "Nuff!"

The Whigs rushed in and pulled their man off. They took him amid loud shouting to their headquarters, scraped some of the mud off of him and washed the blood from his face, and gave him a copious drink from a well-filled gourd. It was not long until the champion began to swell with pride over his victory and a feeling came over him that he could do up every Democrat on the hill. No one seemed anxious to dispute it, and this increased his dares and banters. He walked out into the road in rather a dilapidated air, shook himself and gritted his teeth and said: "I'm Brownlow's ram, and there ain't enough Andy Johnson's jacks in the paster to take the cockleburs out'n my wool." And he bent his huge body and shook his tangled locks like the leader of the flock.

About that time a big hill-billie caught the inspiration from

the juice, and off went his coat and into the air went his hat, and he exclaimed: "I'm the catamount what can claw the burs out'n that old buck's wool." And in a twinkling of an eye they were locked in each other's embrace. But the old mountaineer was too exhausted from his other contest to hold out long, and he was soon ready for the junkpile. Then in turn he cried out: "Nuff!"

Thus at intervals between the voting spells that crowd did not do anything the rest of the day but patronize those barrels and devote the rest of the time to currying Andy Johnson's jacks and shearing Brownlow's rams. When they became too helpless to accept each other's banters, they were a sight to behold. I never before or since saw as many men with bloody noses, bitten ears, black eyes and muddy backs. They looked more like subdued beasts than men. But, be it said to their courage and good sense, there was not brought into play during the whole of those pugilistic performances a stone, a club, a knife or a gun. It was a contest of fists and nothing else, except where the teeth happened to get in their work. Hence there was no serious damage done to anybody, and no ill feelings or feuds followed as a result. They drank and fought it out, and that ended it. They seemed to have no malice or ill will. It was a well understood part of the election exhibition and when the curtain fell upon the ridiculous comedy it became ancient history.

But when the day came to a close and the count began, at least three-fourths of that crowd were completely out of commission. They were lying around in the fence corners like snoozing swine. What to do with them was a responsibility left on grandma's hands, for all of them able to perambulate went toward their homes. She could not take them into her house. In the first place, there were too many of them; and

in the second, they were not fit to enter a house where human beings lived. So she got four or five of the negro men, lighted her lantern, and had them dragged into the stable. This was ample and it was the best she could do. Had they stayed out in that cold, drizzly night they would have frozen, for before morning the rain ceased and a slight freeze set in. In the stable they would at least sleep off their stupor and wake up and be able to pull for home. So she stabled the last hoof of them and securely barred the doors.

The next morning, before day, we heard them squalling like mad panthers and pounding for dear life on the doors. They were sober, cold, mad and boisterous. Failing with the doors, they began to climb into the loft and to come down through the hay windows on the outside, and for a half hour we could hear the echoes of their voices coming back from the hills and gorges until the sound died away in the grim distance.

The next morning the negroes had a job cleaning out that stable and making it a fit place for the horses and mules. As to how the election went, not many of them had any idea, and did not seem to care. They had been to the election, had a big time, and they were satisfied.

Along in the day Mrs. John Edington, the wife of one of the hill-billies who took part in the previous day's proceedings, came down to grandma's with her two boys. I knew them very well, for they occasionally made pilgrimages to grandma's to sell her maple sugar in the late winter. She had a distressed face and she asked grandma if she had seen anything of John. She said he had left home early the day before to come to the election and she had not seen nor heard of him since. She was told that he was among those who had been drinking a good deal, but that after dark he had left and we had not seen anything further of him. She said she was greatly alarmed,



MRS. G. C. RANKIN



that she feared something dreadful had happened to him, and that she had not slept any all night.

Grandma called up several negroes and told them they must start out along all the byways and look for the lost man, and she went along with some of them. Of course I went, too. We searched the paths leading in her direction, and we looked on the hillsides also. In an hour or so we heard Uncle Martin away down the gorge toward a noted spring shout out, "Heah he is!" We all began to converge at the spring and there lay poor old John Edington with his head down in the water, cold and stark in death. He had evidently lost his way and wandered to the spring and lay down to get a drink and was too boozy and cold to pull himself out and he drowned. We got him out and laid him on his back and his cold, glassy eyes vacantly gazed up into the heavens. As long as I live I shall never forget the agonizing cries of that poor simple-hearted woman. The two boys helped to fill the gorge with their distressing lamentations.

I learned right there to despise whiskey-making and whiskey-drinking and became an inveterate enemy to the monster evil. My young eyes saw at once what it had done for that poor woman and those two boys. It made a widow out of her and it made orphans out of them. They let it alone, but it did not let them alone. And just what it did for that poor woman and those two boys in the good old days of which we have heard so much, when everybody had whiskey and it flowed like water, and at a time when the citizen was not vexed by the officious prohibitionists who want to regulate other people's habits, it has continued to do for unfortunate women and children from that far-off day until the present time. Its diabolical business is to send men to hell, and to make widowhood and orphanage as common along the highways of life

as the wild flowers that grew on the native hills and mountains of East Tennessee in the long ago.

When I saw its work at that spring, in the presence of ghastly death, I swore eternal enmity to it, and the increasing years have only intensified my uncompromising opposition to its mission among men. As long as I live my battle cry will be heard: *On with the battle against it!*

One other institution of the hill country deserves a passing notice, and that was the "Old Field School". It flourished in all its glory in my early childhood. It no longer exists, but it was prominent then. You sometimes see it caricatured by modern amateurs for the amusement of those who occasionally get up social or church entertainments; but, to appreciate it you had to attend it and become a part of it. True, in certain communities, back in those times, you would here and there find good schools. Newport had one taught by a West Pointer, and it was famous; but I am now speaking of the school in the hills and the mountains. The first institution I ever attended was the "Old Field School".

It was built of logs, and about twelve feet wide by twenty long. It was located in a typical old field with a proverbial rail fence around it. It was chinked and daubed, had a very rough floor, and its benches were rude and undressed and had no backs to them. It never heard of desks. The benches were arranged crosswise. The teacher sat in front near an old-fashioned jamb, answering for a fireplace. The chimney was a stick-and-dirt structure and had to be propped to hold it in place. About six feet across the back ran a wide, smooth plank, just under a long window made by cutting out the upper side and the lower side of two of the logs, and over the opening was tightly stretched a piece of thick domestic, as there was no glass to put in for windowpanes. This let in

the light. The pens used were made of goosequills and the ink from the bark of swamp maple. This was the writing-place and those who took penmanship practiced it on this writing-board.

The teacher was a thick, heavy-set man, with a rugged face, stiff red hair and shaggy brows. To me he had a look of terror. And this was enhanced by the fact that in the corner near him stood three or four well-seasoned birch rods, and they were not there for ornamental purposes. They were dominant factors in the discipline of that school. The course of study was limited, and the attainments of the teacher were neither varied nor comprehensive. He taught "Readin', 'Rithmetic, Spellin' and Writin'." Some sort of a reader was his text-book, Fowler's 'Rithmetic to the Rule of Three, Webster's Blueback Speller as far as the pictures, and a few sheets of foolscap paper for copybooks made up the course. This school, for about three or four months in the year, was taught by this teacher from the time the memory of man ran not back to the contrary; but no one was ever known to have graduated in its curriculum.

I went to him two terms and never did learn my A, B, C's. He would take up school early in the morning, give two hours for dinner and playtime at noon, and close late in the evening. The most interesting period in the whole day was playtime. The rest of it was irksome and monotonous.

We had three games that monopolized our time and attention—Antny-over, Cat and Bullpen; and, in my judgment, modern baseball and football are no improvement on our old games. The girls jumped the rope, and the rope was usually a long grapevine, trimmed and dressed. All the boys and the girls were a robust and jolly set. They would yawn and stretch before noon and long for playtime. In the afternoon

they would do likewise and look to the closing time. If there was a little confusion the old teacher would shout in stentorian voice, "Silence!" And everything was quiet. There was scarcely a day that two or three boys did not feel the application of those birch rods, and when they were used it was not for social purposes, but to punish. He never did whip me, but he frightened me out of my senses two or three times. Just before dismissing for dinner, and at the close in the evening, he would announce in solemn manner, "Prepare for the big spelling class." Every boy and girl who could spell would grasp their blueback spellers and, at the top of their lusty voices, they would begin—"P-u-b-li-ca-ti'n, Publication", and you could hear them a quarter of a mile. After several minutes of this jargon of noise and confusion he would shout, "Form in line!" And around the whole room they would take their places. These two occasions were the most interesting times of school hours. They would turn each other down and this was fun.

There was one prevailing custom that always added spice to the school experience, and that was when some fellow not in school would ride by and shout, "School butter!" This was a challenge and it mattered not what was going on in school hours, the whole outfit of boys would break from the schoolroom and take after him, and sometimes a whole half a day of the school would be given up to a performance of that sort. This was no violation of the rules of the school, for it was a dare that no schoolboys would take from an outsider. If they succeeded in capturing the challenger, the penalty inflicted was a repeated ducking in the river.

One day, as we all sat lazily in school, we saw a long, lank young hill-billie ride by to mill. We expected him to give the challenge, but he did not do it. But we knew he would do

it on his return and just after he had passed the schoolhouse. We saw it in his dirty face as he gazed in at us. So at the proper time we prepared for him. The road down below the house ran directly along a stiff stream with a stake-and-rider fence on the other side. We sent three or four boys a quarter of mile down the road and had them hide in the weeds by the road. We kept glancing up the road to see him return. By and by we saw him on his old mule swinging along down the hill with his big feet nearly touching the ground. As he passed the door he glanced in with a sort of a significant look, and after he had gotten a few steps and thought he was safe he swung his old straw hat over his head and yelled at full voice, "School butter! Rotten eggs for your supper!" And he put the strap to the mule and away he went. The whole school dashed out and took after him. He raised a cloud of dust in his rear, but directly the boys down the road sprang out and we came in behind. He saw he was gone. But he leaped off his mule, scaled the fence like a deer and started through the field toward a swamp; but we were hot on his trail. Ultimately he stopped and tried to bluff us, but it was no use. We closed in on him and threw him down. Two or three gathered hold of his arms and as many of his long legs, and amid hilarity we carried and dragged him to the stream and waded out with him. Time and again we soused him under, and would let him up and banter him, and then dip him again. The old teacher commanded us to let him go, but he was a caution to behold. That was fun enough for us for one day, but it was hard on the hill-billie. This was the "Old Field School" and these were some of its experiences. No wonder it served its day and passed out. The wonder is that it ever had a day!

CHAPTER IV.

The Death of My Father and Its Effects on Me

It was on a beautiful morning in May when I had just returned to grandma's house from the river, where I had been fishing. What a splendid morning it was! In my mind and heart it will live with increasing interest as long as memory survives. Nature, like an Oriental queen of the olden times, was clad in her vernal robes of richest hue. The atmosphere fresh from the circumjacent hills, was redolent with the fragrance of foliage and flowers. Feathered songsters, exuberant with the joy of early springtime, were making the wildwood and the meadow vocal with their sweetest melody. A brighter sun never rolled up the eastern sky in his chariot of flames. Even the crystal stream, instinct with life, offered its tribute of joy through the music of its limpid waves. The far-off mountains, tinged with a mellow azure, sent forth their deep-toned praises from native harps of hemlock and pine. All sights and sounds and motions were expressive of universal peace and happiness.

It was then that a rider on a foaming steed came dashing up to the gate and his face was pale and his manner nervous. Without uttering a word of preliminary warning he said: "George, your father is dead and you must go home at once." Grandma appeared in time to hear the announcement, but be-

fore she could ask for particulars he had turned and ridden rapidly away. Never did a blow fall with duller thud upon the heart of a boy. "Can it be possible?" was the first question that addressed itself to my mind. Only a few days before I had left home and he was in his usual health. But the announcement could not well be doubted, and it was not long until grandma and myself were hastening toward the scene of affliction and sorrow. All along the journey I could not restrain the hope that on arriving at home we would find the message untrue. How could it be true? Thus for several miles my heart drifted between hope and despair. After awhile we came in front of the house and groups of men were seen standing in the yard. This was confirmatory of the intelligence. We alighted and entered the home, and the first thing to greet my eyes was the outstretched linen underneath which was the body of my father. Close by the side of it sat mother, stunned with grief, for the death had come suddenly. She instinctively threw her arms around me and said: "Poor little boy, you have no father to love and care for you now." Her grief was inconsolable.

The night was a long, sleepless night and when the morning came it brought no light of hope to that stricken home. The sun moved as usual up the sky, and toward the noontide the silent procession moved out toward the hill. How often we had gone there before to offer love's token upon the pulseless mounds, but never before under circumstances of such grief and bereavement as these. The man of God offered a touching prayer for the young widow and her three orphans, the coffin was lowered by strong hands, the dirt soon filled the gaping wound in the earth and the cruel grave had swallowed up our hope. With hearts bleeding we lingered a moment and in silence dropped hot tears upon the new-made tomb, and then

wended our way back toward the place we called home; but it no longer felt like the home that we had once known. The circle was broken and a portion of the light had gone out forever. There was an aching void that no human presence could fill. To the great busy world these scenes and experiences did not amount to much; but to us it was big with ominous significance. For the first time in my young life the world looked cold and cheerless and words of human comfort seemed like a hollow mockery.

I shall never forget the first night in that home of distress and loneliness. After the frugal meal of the evening, of which we had partaken but little, we gathered in the front room. It was a silent place, except for the broken sobs of mother and the sighs of my own breaking heart. She lighted the old tallow candle and sat it upon the table and took down her old calfskin-covered Bible. She turned to the twenty-third Psalm and read through tearful eyes and faltering voice: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;" and on to the end of the chapter. And then she opened the book in the New Testament and read: "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." We then knelt down in our family devotion, and she poured out her heart into the ear of him who had said: "I will be the husband to the widow and the father to the orphan." And we found comfort.

In a few days the old administrator came around and settled up the affairs of the little estate. When the debts were paid there was but little left for the support of that once happy family. There was no homestead law in those days, and it was

not long until what my father had accumulated was disposed of to pay security debts, and we were without even a home. But my mother's faith failed not. It had already been tried in the furnace and, though shaken, it still survived. She firmly believed that the God of all the earth would do right. So she turned her face toward the future and bared her bosom to the storms as she addressed herself to the stern duties of life.

What was she to do? Grandma told her she must come home, but my uncle and family were living with her and and mother did not care to take my brother and myself there, as it would place two families of children under the same roof, and that would not be for the best. So she resolved to accept the invitation for herself and my little sister—to send me and my brother to my Grandfather Rankin. I was nearly twelve years old and my brother five years younger. The old gentleman said he would be glad to have us, and that was the disposition made of us.

I was no stranger in that home, as I had been there a number of times, but not as an orphan boy; and that made all the difference. Grandfather was far advanced in life and he was living with his second wife. They had four grown daughters. My father had been forced away from that home when he was in his 'teens by his disagreeable stepmother. She was a very peculiar old lady even when I knew her. The only serious mistake that my grandfather was ever known to have made was when he married her. She was not in his class. She was a Dutch woman and not one of the best types of her hardy race. She was not religious, had no taste for books, spoke broken English, and she was brusque and petulant. But she was the most industrious woman I have ever known. She was a slave to work. It was against her nature to see anybody idle about her and she could find more for a boy to do



than any human being of my knowledge. She was a model housekeeper and kept everything about her as clean and shiny as a new pin. And she had brought up those four daughters in her footsteps. Two of them were just like her for the world in their dispositions and appearance. The other two were like grandfather. I soon learned to love them, but not the other two and the old lady. They were very repugnant to me and I was to them. The dislike was cordial and mutual.

Think of a boy, brought up in my mother's and her mother's home, having to come under the government of this new regime. It was something terrible. They soon began to pick at me, to tell me I had not been half raised, that I was lazy and trifling. My hat was never in the right place, my shoes were never cleaned, my hair was out of order, and my manners sloven. They were constantly finding fault with me. It mattered not how many cows I had to drive up and look after, how many hogs to feed, how much wood to chop during the morning and evening, nor how hard I had to work all day in the field, they expected me to look like I had come out of a bandbox all the time. They taxed their ingenuity to find something to keep me employed and then fussed at me for the way it was done. I heard my own name called so much in that old Dutch twang until I learned to hate it. It was nothing but "Shorch, Shorch!" every time I appeared about the house. They made no effort to cultivate the better side of my nature. They treated me more like a servant. At night when I was tired and sleepy in the winter time they had me to sit up until nine o'clock and tack carpet rags. They made life miserable for me on all parts of the ground.

Grandfather was kind to me and considerate of me, yet he was strict with me. I worked along with him in the field when the weather was agreeable and when it was inclement I

helped him in his hatter's shop, for the Civil War was in progress and he had returned at odd times to hatmaking. It was my business in the shop to stretch foxskins and coonskins across a wood-horse and with a knife, made for that purpose, pluck the hair from the fur. I despise the odor of foxskins and coonskins to this good day. He had me to walk two miles every Sunday to Dandridge to Church service and Sunday-school, rain or shine, wet or dry, cold or hot; yet he had fat horses standing in his stable. But he was such a blue-stocking Presbyterian that he never allowed a bridle to go on a horse's head on Sunday. The beasts had to have a day of rest. Old Doctor Minnis was the pastor, and he was the dryest and most interminable preacher I ever heard in my life. He would stand motionless and read his sermons from manuscript for one hour and a half at a time and sometimes longer. Grandfather would sit and never take his eyes off of him, except to glance at me to keep me quiet. It was torture to me. When we would return home he would put all the books like the life of Daniel Boone, General Francis Marian and Davy Crockett high up on the top shelf, and put me down at a table with the New Testament and the Shorter Catechism. When through with them I could walk around some, but was never allowed to whistle, to knock on the fence or to throw a stone at a bird. It was the Sabbath and I was expected to keep it holy. Yet old grandma paid no attention to the Sabbath and went about her business a good deal like any other day. Her daughters, however, had to observe the day, for grandfather was a strict disciplinarian. Everything about the place observed his Sunday regulations except grandma. She was a privileged character. All this, I presume, did me some good in my life and character, but it was taught me in the severest way I had ever known. It was an irksome sort of



religion and I used to wonder how grandfather enjoyed it, but he seemed to get genuine pleasure out of it. It was that sort of tuition that he had given to my father in his boyhood, and he thought it good and wholesome for me. But on week days he granted me a great deal more liberty. Had it not been for the female members of the home I would have gotten along very well, except on Sunday. Grandfather made it hard for me on the Sabbath and they made it even harder for me during the week. So life had but little for me worth living for during the year and a half I spent in that household and on its premises.

As the months went by I became rebellious. Such discipline began to sour my disposition and to make me resentful. I resolved to get from under it. So one Sunday, coming from Church service, myself and brother planned to make our escape. That night we went to our room earlier than usual, packed up all our belongings, and after everybody was asleep I slipped out with the bundle, went up the road a short piece and hid it behind a tree. We would have left that night, but we were afraid to travel that far after dark. The next morning we were out at the woodpile chopping wood when the bell rang for breakfast. We pretended to be very busy finishing up a job, and when they had all gotten in the dining-room we made a break for dear life up the road; but old grandma happened to look out and see us and she knew at a glance what we were doing. She ran to the door and screamed at us, but we made tracks that much faster. She saw we were gone, and the last we heard from her was: "Never you show dem faces here no more." But it was a needless injunction. More than forty-five years have passed by since then, but I have never seen that place again, neither did I ever lay eyes upon the face or the back of my old Dutch step-grandmother. It was an even

lasting adieu. I was entirely satisfied with my experience and never had the slightest desire to repeat any part of it.

It was late in the evening when we got home, for it was several miles and the weather was warm. Now, just what to tell mother required some study and preparation. But by the time I reached home I had my story complete, and it was the whole truth and nothing but the truth. When we entered the house I rushed into her arms and poured out my tale of sorrow to her and to grandma. They listened with sympathy, and grandma said that we had done exactly right; that she never had thought it best to send us down there. It was not long until we were seated at the table enjoying a good meal. It was like heaven to us. We had gotten back where somebody loved us and spoke kindly to us.

But my troubles were not over. My uncle did not want me to live at grandma's because his wife objected to so many children, as she put it, in one house. The fact is, she did not like me because she could not boss me. It was mostly her fault, but partly mine, I presume. I never did like to be bossed by outside people. I resented it in my boyhood and I resent it to this good day. It was born in my blood and I am not responsible for it. So she and myself had an open collision, and my uncle told me I must not live there any longer. My love for him was none too great. I never had forgiven him for selling Jack to Andy Ramsey. He was a cross-grained and narrow-minded man, with a very disagreeable disposition. Grandma intervened, but it was no use, for I had made up my mind that I would not live in a home under such circumstances. I was then fourteen years old and had some independence of my own. So I determined to leave without a contest.

The snows of an East Tennessee winter were lying deep



A Sob Forced Its Way Through My Lips as I Trudged Along.

upon the ground and the ice was frozen thick over the streams. The branches of the forest were bending under their load and a fierce December wind was sweeping over the hills. The heavens were overcast with shifting clouds and the merry twitter of the birds was hushed into silence. A day more forbidding and unpropitious never flung the mantle of its subdued light over the mountains and the valleys; but the day was no more perturbed than my own feelings and thoughts, as step by step I silently moved down the hill and out of sight of my grandma's home. My eyes were blinded with cold tears and occasionally a sob forced its way through my lips as I trudged along. By and by I knocked at the door of a large, comfortable farmhouse and was invited by a kind voice to come in. They knew me and they knew my father in his lifetime; they had some knowledge of the things in the home I had just left, and they were in sympathy with me. He was a relative of grandma's, owned a large farm lying along both banks of the river, and also a good gristmill and sawmill. I was not strong enough to do a man's work, but I had a man's willingness, and my old kinsman told me that if I would be a good boy and learn to work that I should not be without a home and something to eat and to wear. For several months I remained with this kind old man working for my board and clothes. It was small pay, but the experience was worth much to me. I added to my stock of industrious habits and learned more about farm life.

About this time my aged grandma died and this brought to me another real sorrow, for she was one of the best and truest friends I ever had. It did more—it made it necessary for my mother to hunt another home. So she and myself applied to a gentleman of large means and broad acres for a small house in which to live and a few acres to cultivate. He had been a

lifelong friend of my father and offered us every assistance. In fact, he said we could have the house for nothing and ten acres of rich land to work; that he would furnish the horse, the feed and the implements and give us half we could make. It was a comfortable one-story house with two rooms. We moved into it, happy to be once more united. My mother was skilled with her needle and she was handy at all sorts of domestic work. I soon found a good man on the same farm who went in with me and we worked our crops together. We had a good cow and moderate supplies for the season, and we were again happy under our own roof. It was an humble roof, but it was home, and mother was there to preside over it. It was a little heaven on earth. Twenty years afterward I visited that community, went into that old house, bared my head and felt that it was a sacred place.

We made a fine crop of corn and my part of it was abundant to run us through the year, and we had some for sale. For once again I felt independent. The next season I made preparation on a larger scale, rented from our old friend a more extensive piece of good bottom land and determined to be my own boss and work my crop by myself. We had a milch cow, mother added to our needed comfort by the use of her needle, and we were moderately well equipped to become self-sustaining. My benefactor, who owned the large farm, gave me every encouragement. He told me to pick out my own mule, that he would furnish the feed as before, supply the seed and the utensils and in every way stand by me. Yes, he went so far as to take me into his confidence and to tell me what he thought of me. He said that I was the best boy and had the best habits of industry of any boy he had ever had about him, and that he had every confidence in my honesty and truthfulness, and that he could trust me implicitly. He

even said that if I continued in the future as in the past that he would aid me in any way, for he added: "I believe you have the making of a man in you." My, but that made me stand several inches taller!

I went home that night and told mother all about my arrangements for the year and what our friend had said to me. A smile of satisfaction came over her face and there was something of her old-time look of happiness in her expression. She seemed to take on hope and told me that she was very proud of me and that she was so glad to have a boy so well thought of and upon whom she could depend. Could anything under the sun have caused me to disappoint such a mother? Nay, verily! Under her care and godly tuition I had no very bad habits. I had been thrown with most every sort of association common to that community during the two previous years, and temptations had been strong and alluring; but the influence of that mother had been stronger and far more potent with me than all other influences combined. The very fact that she trusted me to the limit, and told me so, was a stimulus to live right and maintain my integrity that no temptation could overcome. She loved me and had confidence in me, and in turn I was her comfort and her hope; and I was ready to die for her.

All this stirred my better nature and made me resolve to be a man sure enough. If other people could trust me and if my mother saw something in me, I was certainly going to do my part to merit such confidence and meet their expectations.

So when the early spring opened I began operations on my own account and went to work with a will to put my ground in good condition and plant my new crop. It was not many weeks until my first planting was up and the second was in the ground. Steadily the work progressed, the seasons were good

and the outlook fine. By the middle of June my growing corn looked like a canebrake as it waved gracefully under the breeze. I sat one morning on the fence and looked out over it. I knew nearly every hill of it by name. I had lived in it by day and had thought of it by night. It was my crop! My honest toil had made it and my heart swelled with gratitude as I gazed over the flattering prospect. My nature was stirred to its best thought, its best purpose, its noblest resolve. After all, there was something in store for me and I took courage and felt the impulses of a strange inspiration. I began to actually think, and my thought formed itself into purpose, and I began to have dreams and visions. But in the midst of my reverie I came to myself and realized that after all I was only a poor boy, without fortune and but few friends, and that at best my prospect was only that of a plodding toiler and that it was cruel to allow baseless aspirations to kindle hopes that would be destined to die in their borning. What could I do except to plow corn, hew wood and draw water, and be the tenant of more fortunate people? Of course I did not think in the terms in which I am writing; but in my crude way and in my awkward fancy I started a few aircastles and then exploded them. But there was something latent in my conscious nature that was making effort to assert its purpose. I did not understand it then, but as the years passed by it finally became apparent to me. God was touching the mysterious depths of my sleeping consciousness and I knew it not!

CHAPTER V

Some Tragic Incidents in the Hill Country

As I am not confining myself to strict chronology in these chapters, I will drop back a year or two and make mention of a few war incidents in East Tennessee. This section was the scene of many episodes back in the early sixties. Some of them were tragic and others of them ludicrous and amusing.

During the most of that bloody war, East Tennessee was disputed territory. It bordered on Kentucky and, when the Confederates were not occupying it, the Federals were in possession. The people themselves were very evenly divided, just as they had been in matters political. Families were often estranged and neighborhoods were rent asunder. Hundreds of the men entered the Confederate service, and when the conscript law went into force hundreds more of them crossed over the border and joined the Union army.

A good many in the hill country did not enter either army, but took to the woods; and while their sympathies were with the old flag, they became, for the most part, outlaws. They committed many depredations, especially upon the homes of those in the Southern army. And they often precipitated trouble with Confederate scouts, particularly those headed by conscript officers.

It was almost worth a Southern man's life, whether a sol-



dier or a citizen, to venture near their habitations. They belonged to the wild and reckless class at best, and as the war gradually lifted all restraints of civil government they were a desperate set of men and made themselves a holy terror. They were deeply incensed at the conscript officers and let no opportunity escape to give them serious trouble. They had frequent collisions with them and bloody tragedy often followed. Now and then some of those in the Union army would venture back and give encouragement to this class of men. It was a terrible state of things.

I remember one conscript officer who made himself very offensive to these hill people. He did his utmost to capture them and force them into the Confederate service. His name was Captain James Hurley. He lived in East Tennessee and knew them, and they knew him. He was also acquainted with every nook and corner of that region. He had a grown son who was one of the Confederate scouts, and sometimes, when at home, he would accompany his father in his incursions into the hill country after those men.

Captain Hurley, with his son and others, one day made a raid in that section to round up some of them, and he took every precaution against danger. He even had his little five-year-old boy behind him as a protection, thinking that no sort of a foe would want to injure a child. But he reckoned without his host. He was returning from his search in the late afternoon, and passed out of the hills into the main road above where we lived. Just after he entered it he had to cross a small creek far above which was an overhanging cliff—a forbidding-looking place. Thinking that he had passed the danger line, he stopped carelessly to let his horse drink, and the crack of several rifles rang out on the evening air. One of the bullets pierced Captain Hurley's heart, went through his

body and into the brain of his little boy. They never knew what hurt them.

This produced a profound sensation. As they fled from their hiding-places, followed by shots from the guns of the guards, several of them were recognized by young Hurley. He swore vengeance against them and their compatriots. He was a daring character, and from that time on there were hot times in the hill country of East Tennessee. Even when the Federal army occupied the lower country young Hurley would dash into those hills unexpectedly and commit deeds of crimson daring.

On one occasion, when it was thought that the Confederates were clear out of the country, he appeared in that wild section bent on trouble for those daredevil men. He knew where they lived and he was acquainted with their haunts. But as he was coming out of one of those gorges he passed a cabin and, unexpectedly, one of them fired at the squad and rushed from the house to the crest of the hill with bullets making music in his ears. The hilltop was soon surrounded with a soldier about every fifty yards apart.

Young Hurley, as we afterwards learned, was riding slowly near the timber, standing in his stirrups, looking cautiously into the underbrush for the escaped man. He passed near an oak tree and heard something scrape the sides of it, and as he threw his eye upon it toward the tree he was just in time to see a huge Enfield rifle coming down upon him with its gaping muzzle. He threw himself from his horse to the ground just as the ball tore the seat of his saddle away. The man, thinking he had killed him, broke over him toward a safer retreat before the others could have time to overtake him. But young Hurley was up and after him on foot like a wolf after a deer. At the foot of the hill he disabled him



with a shot from his pistol and then ran up to him and saw one of the very gang that had assassinated his father a few months before. Though the poor fellow begged piteously for his life, the infuriated pursurer emptied the remaining barrels of his pistol into his quivering flesh. I learned these facts some years later in another State from one of the scouts that participated in the raid.

The father of this young man lived about two miles from my grandma's and he, as well as the rest of us, had heard the shooting and knew that something had happened. He was an old man and believed that his son was killed. We went along with him and searched into the night, but failed to make any discovery. The next morning we renewed the effort and up in the day found the body, but the wild hogs had partially destroyed it.

Some time after that when Longstreet's army drove Burnside and his hosts back toward Knoxville many of those men were left in those hills. They lived there and took chances on escaping by hiding in the caves and rugged places of the country. Young Hurley found out where he thought a crowd of them were being harbored by friends. He adopted a ruse to capture and kill them. He dressed up one of his comrades in a worn Federal uniform and sent him in there to play the part of an escaped Federal prisoner, which he did successfully. He approached a cabin in the locality of their hiding and completely threw the woman off her guard. He told his tale and begged that some one who knew the country should pilot him across the line into the Yankee camp. She at once left him and disappeared in the woods. Directly she returned with two of the men heavily armed. At first they suspected him, but he convinced them that he was a Federal and that he had suffered badly at the hands of the Confederates and that he

had escaped and was anxious to rejoin his command. So they accepted his story and took him to their ambuscade, opened a trap door on the side of the hill and he entered a veritable den of them. There were a dozen or more and they were the denizens of the mountains, and some of them were the very men the scouts had been trying to locate for months. They were armed to the teeth. After nightfall two of them took him along a by-path and put him over the river in a canoe, and then out of danger, and left him. It was not long until he dropped down the river at another landing, crossed and made haste to report at his camp. By daylight the scout was ready for business.

Led by the "escaped Federal soldier", they were not long in finding the locality. They surrounded it, and the man who knew the exact spot approached it and told them to come out, and that their old enemy was there in force. There was nothing left for them to do but to obey. There were ten or twelve of them. They were tied with their hands behind them and made to stand with their backs to the scouts, and as the word "fire" was pronounced all those poor fellows leaped forward pierced with bullets except one, who dashed down the hill into the gorge and made his escape. After it was over it looked like a slaughter pen.

These facts were also given to me in detail many years after the war, in Georgia, by a member of that scout. The fact itself I knew too sadly when it occurred. Twenty-odd years later, when on a visit to my old haunts, I visited that gruesome spot, and the excavation in the hillside where they were in hiding was still recognized. I need not pursue this line of tragedy any further, but I could relate many more just as startling.

With this state of things in progress for two years, crimi-

nating and recriminating, it is easy to imagine the condition of public sentiment when the war closed. Scores and scores of men who entered the service of the Southern army were not even permitted to return and settle up their business, much less to live there again. They disappeared from view as completely as though the earth had swallowed them up. I have met many of them scattered about over Texas, leading peaceable and successful lives. Some, however, who served in the Confederate army at points far removed from their old home-place, thinking that no harm would be done them, did return; but more than a few of them were badly treated, and in some instances slain. This state of feeling did not exist in the hearts of the better class of men who fought in the Union army. It was largely confined to fellows of the baser sort. But even among the better class personal prejudice was deep-seated and lasted several years. And it extended to innocent men.

Some of our Southern Methodist preachers were persecuted, though they took no part in the war. I remember two of them that were scourged unmercifully. One of them was Rev. Henry Neal and the other Rev. Jacob Smith. They were sent to Blount County to preach and were there serving their charges inoffensively. They were taken in hand by a lot of ruffians, tied to a tree and whipped until physicians had to take pieces of splinters and shreds of clothing from their lacerated backs. It was months before they recovered from the abuse, and Mr. Smith never did recover. He lost his voice as a result and finally went to a premature grave. Strange to say, every one of those desperadoes, sooner or later, came to a violent death. It seemed that the curse of God followed them to untimely graves.

`But in the course of the years, after civil government was

again restored and public sentiment took its place behind the officers of the law, this condition of the public mind passed away and peace and order took the place of disorder and confusion. Whatever else of the evil influence remained slunk away into the dark places and contented itself with finding expression in wildcat distilleries; and Uncle Sam is still having trouble in some sections of that country with this lawless class. But the great bulk of those East Tennesseans are among the best and most devoted law-abiding people in this great country of ours.

In late years that very section has been furnishing the leading men of that State. Robert L. Taylor, three times Governor and then Senior United States Senator, lived in the heart of East Tennessee; and so does the Hon. Ben Hooper, the present able Governor of the Commonwealth. And in prohibition sentiment East Tennessee has long been in the lead. The old regime has long ago passed from the experiences of that mountain section, and a prosperous condition and a new order of things are making that section one of the most intelligent and progressive portions of the South.

Toward the close of the Civil War in that country I figured in a sensational though somewhat amusing episode. While the war was in progress that whole country was stripped of everything in the way of livestock that either side to the contest could lay their hands upon. Horses, cows, mules, hogs; in fact, everything that a soldier could either ride, hitch to a wagon or kill and eat was swept away. Some of the old men and the boys and negroes would hide an animal out now and then in the hills and thus save it, but these were the rare exceptions. They took all that we had except two milch cows and a fine mare and a splendid iron-gray mule. Old John, one of the trusted negroes, and myself had charge of these

animals. We kept them secreted in a basin among surrounding hills. We would pack feed to them by night and for months they never saw the bottom lands or the barn.

The mare was well groomed by John. She was a coal-black, sixteen hands high, well-made and a thing of beauty. She had all the gaits, and she was gentle under the saddle or in the plow. The mule was a fine type of his kind. He was fat, his color was rich, his ears long and his body was shapely. He was my especial charge. We looked to these to do service when the war was over and crop times returned again. They were our only hope. Hence we cared for them with great caution and secrecy. Occasionally we would call up the dogs and go over the hills apparently on a hunt so as not to excite the suspicion of some straggling band of soldiers, but in reality we were on our way to feed, water and curry those animals. We would mount them and ride them around in that secluded spot for exercise. Beyond that they saw nothing of the outside world for months. Old John was the most suspicious and secretive negro I ever knew, and he was the most deceitful and hypocritical old rascal of my acquaintance. If any one asked him about livestock he could look them straight in the face and tell them the most plausible lie imaginable. He could do it with such apparent frankness that I never knew a soldier to doubt his statements.

Well, the war was about over and we had a few oats and some hay left, and from this supply we were drawing nightly. John told my mother that he really thought there was not much danger now, as there had not been a soldier seen passing through there for several days. He said he believed that we might with safety the next morning go out to the hills before good day, ride the mare and the mule into the barn and carry back some feed for them instead of packing it on our backs,

and she gave her consent. So by four o'clock the next morning, just as the day was peeping over the horizon, we were on the backs of those animals riding them down the hill into the barn lot.

Where we were then living was a romantic spot and full of natural beauty. The river made a bend above where we lived and circled around one of the most beautiful and fertile pieces of bottom land upon which the eye ever rested. From the barn to where the bend was made and where there was a ford it was just one mile on a dead level. Our house was at the foot of the hills and rather in the base of a natural circle formed by the hills. The road came up in front of the house and passed around in the shape of a horseshoe, and the barn was three hundred yards below and, so to speak, between the corks of the shoe. On either side the barn was closer to the road than it was to the house, but the gate opened in front of the house leading down to the barn. Between the road on either side there was a heavy rail fence and a deep ditch or two.

It was just good daylight, but the sun was not quite up, and John and myself were about ready to mount our steeds with a big bundle of oats thrown across their withers, ready to return to the hills beyond the house. John happened to look across the patch lying between the road and the barn and his eyes almost dropped down on his big cheek bones. I had not noticed anything, and he exclaimed in a suppressed undertone: "Lo'dy a-massy, Goge, look yander!" I glanced across the patch to the road and there sat ten or a dozen Yankee soldiers upon their horses, in bright uniforms, quietly looking at us. Doubtless they had been there several minutes, but they were waiting for us to start back toward the house so as to give chase after we reached the road and before we could get into the hills. They knew that if we ran toward the

river that they would have to gallop up the road to the house nearly a quarter of a mile to get through the gate and take after us and that would give us nearly half a mile the start.

Old John said quietly: "Gim-me yo foot." He grabbed it and gave me a spring and I was on the mule's back in a jiffy, and he leaped to the back of the mare and then shouted to me: "Put de strap under dat mule's belly and foller me!" And he turned toward the river and touched the mare under the flank with his plow-line. That was enough. The oats were scattered in every direction and that mare started like a streak of lightning down the road toward the river. The old mule followed suit. It was a race for life. The Yankees shouted at us to halt. And they fired several rounds above our heads. The bullets whistled a peculiar tune, but they only accelerated the velocity of the mare and the mule. It was but a few moments until she was far down the road ahead of me and she was literally burning the wind. It was the first good run she had for months and the air of that fresh April morning inspired her with additional life. The old mule was doing his best, but compared with the mare he was making slow speed. I glanced back to see what was taking place in the rear, and by that time the Yankees had gotten through the gate and they were coming like a thunder storm down the level road, but I had a good lead and with my strap I was giving the old mule additional reasons why he should accelerate his operations, and he seemed to realize that it was an urgent case. He shook his monstrous head and groaned like an elephant in distress, and he seemed to measure off ten or fifteen feet at a leap. Two or three carbines cracked behind me and the peculiar sing of the balls made the air responsive. They were gaining on me, but I was gaining on the river, too. I was being jolted to and fro like a gray squirrel in the

storm-tossed branches of a tree, but I was swinging on his shaggy mane for dear life with one hand and using the strap vigorously with the other. By this time John had turned down the bank of the river and disappeared. I knew that he was safe, but my condition was perilous. The Yankees were coming and I had a quarter of a mile to go to reach the stream. The old mule was panting like a steam engine, but he was not only holding his own but he seemed to enjoy it. Finally I reached the bank of the river. He was going at such strides that I could not turn him down the stream to enter the ford thirty yards below, and he plunged several feet down the bank right into the river. He threw the water all over me and liked to have emptied me into the stream. He recovered himself, shook the water from his long ears and he was soon in shallow depths sufficient to again take up something like his former speed. John was already out on the other side and had disappeared in the forest. When I reached midstream one by one the Yankees came to the bank over which I had just plunged. But they stopped. They knew they could never overtake me in the river, and then on the other side might not be safe. So they fired several shots over my head and yelled at me like wild Indians. As I pulled out on the opposite side they gave me a hearty cheer and made the river banks resound with their laughter. Even if they did not get the stock they seemed to have enjoyed the fun. But it scared me out of about twelve months' growth.

I went on to one of my uncles who lived some distance across the river, though I ran a slight risk of meeting Southern scouts. Where old John went I did not learn for some days. The next day I left the mule hid out near my uncle's and ventured back home on foot. When I reached the house mother was delighted to see me and find that I was safe. The



Chased by the Yankees at the Close of the War, But I Saved the Mule.

Yankees on their return assured her that I was not hurt and they went on their way. I had a thrilling experience to relate to her, but she had stood in the yard and witnessed the most of it. She made sure that the horse and the mule were gone when she first saw those fellows standing in the road and looking across toward them at the barn.

It was three or four days before we heard anything from old John. Early one morning he came slipping up the back of the yard and peeped into the kitchen and said: "Miss Jane, dem Yankees done gone? Da sho' skeered me out'en my sense!" My uncle, to whom the animals belonged, congratulated us on our escape, and when peace was declared a few weeks after he was ready to pitch a crop in his effort to recoup his broken fortune. But as long as I live I will never forget that race across the bottoms to the river with those Yankees shouting and shooting at me. My pulse beats faster to-day as I recount the incidents and live over the experience again. But we saved the mare and the mule, and that was glory enough for one day.

Old John and myself became fast friends. He was a mighty coon hunter and he had two of the best coon dogs in all that section. Many a time he and myself have gone out late at night and started a coon. The dogs would put him up a large tree and John, with his faithful axe, would chop till nearly daylight to fell that tree. When it was ready to fall I would take the dogs and go fifty feet beyond danger in the direction it was leaning and when it would hit the ground with a crash I would turn the dogs loose and sic them into the branches, and when they found the coon, my, what a beautiful fight we would have! Then in triumph we would carry our game home and a few nights later John would have a coon supper. But right there I drew the line. No coon for me.

CHAPTER VI

A Turning Point in My Life

We are never assured of what a day will bring forth, and when we think our prospects the brightest there is often a cloud hanging in the foreground of our plans and purposes. Just at a time when I thought my future was determined another misfortune flung its shadow across my plans. My benefactor, of whom I have already spoken, was taken ill and after a few weeks died. His large estate passed into the hands of an administrator for settlement and all my plans were thrown into confusion. There was no possible chance for me to make further arrangements about land and stock to work it. For the time being I was all at sea and my future was nebulous. After resolving the situation in my own mind without reaching a conclusion I submitted the question to mother and we went over it carefully together.

Two miles from where we lived there was an extensive rock quarry where stones were gotten out for bridge and building purposes, and it was owned and conducted by an Englishman whose name was Croft. We knew him very well and he seemed to be a man of good heart and he was acquainted with our condition. He was just past middle age, a good business man and he employed quite a number of hands. Now since my plans for farming were out of the question, we both concluded that I had better apply to him for an apprenticeship to become a stonemason. It would pay me a reasonably good

salary while I was learning the trade and when I had once finished it good wages would always be assured. Still she had some misgiving as to the influence of such associations upon my character. I assured her that she need not have any fears on that score. But she had keen intuition and her mother-heart saw possible danger.

The next morning I went out to the quarry and saw Mr. Croft and laid my desire before him. He looked at me kindly and said that he feared I was too young to undertake that sort of an enterprise. I was sixteen years of age and rather well developed for my years, and I felt like I could do nearly anything that an ordinary man could do. I was insistent on my proposition and told him that I was more than willing to make the effort if he would open the way. He finally yielded to my entreaty, for I was importunate; and he told me that he was willing for me to make the experiment. My bosom swelled with emotions at the thought of my success. He took me into his office and explained to me what my duties would be. At first I would simply carry tools from the works to the shop, get them put in good condition and keep the workmen supplied with their implements; then, after I had served at this the usual time, I would be put to simple drilling and get stones ready for splitting; and when I had learned to handle the drills well I would be put to dressing the material; and that during the term of my apprenticeship he would pay me seventy-five cents per day if I would board myself. That was easy and it looked good to me. Four dollars and fifty cents per week would amount to eighteen dollars per month and, in my eyes, that was a good salary. With what mother could do with her needle we could get along swimmingly, for we already had supplies to do us for several months, if not quite a year. It was glorious.

I hastened back home to tell mother and she was much pleased with the arrangement. That night she talked it all over with me and gave me wholesome advice as to my conduct, for she knew that the vocation was a hard one and that it would throw me face to face with many gross temptations, and that I would need to be on my guard. She was more interested in my moral welfare than she was in my material success. She knew also the rough class of people I would be associated with and it was natural for her to be anxious about me.

The next morning, bright and early, with my little dinner-bucket on my arm I was off for the rock quarry with a light heart and with high hopes. My first day carrying tools from and to the shop was easy. In fact, it was a sort of play for me. I really wanted to get through with that part of my training and get a hammer and a drill in my hands. I noticed the old workmen and there was nothing difficult about their work and they seemed to like me. Most of them were grizzled Irishmen, jolly fellows and full of fun. They always had something amusing to say to me, and I rather enjoyed their easy and familiar way of jesting with me. But they were a rough lot of men, with no refinement and very coarse in their language. Then I recalled why it was that my mother felt some concern about my association with them. At night when I would go home she would ask me all about my work and the men and how they treated me. She kept herself very well posted as to my surroundings and the effect of the new life on me. These jolly old Irishmen were not only coarse and vulgar in their speech, but they were drinking men also. Usually, on Monday mornings, they were out of repair and not fit for work until the day was half gone. They would laugh and rehearse their Sunday experiences and tell me that I did not know what fun was; that I ought to come over to the tavern and spend some

time with them. The other employes were negroes. They worked at the derrick and hauled the dressed stones to the river where the railway bridge was in course of construction across the French Broad. They were also a hard crowd. I was at home at night with my mother and one visit to the tavern on Sunday more than satisfied me. I did not want any more of that sort of observation.

Mr. Croft was kind to me and really liked me, but he had a boss by the name of Tommy Thorn who did not like anybody. He was an old man, stooped over with age and dissipation, small of stature and not strong. He was cross-grained, mean-tempered and the most expert cusser I ever heard talk. Profanity was his common vernacular. He had reduced it to a science, and I have never met his equal as an adept in the use of profane speech. The Irishmen could not hold him a candle in the game of swearing. He swore when he was in good humor, which was a rare state of temper for him, and he swore worse when he was in a fit of anger; and he was usually mad at somebody or about something. It was the exception when anything or anybody pleased him. He was an old Englishman, a sort of a dilapidated old reprobate. He had been all over the world and had mixed with all sorts of people. But he was an experienced stonemason and he was gifted in his ability to keep men at work and as to the best methods of constantly keeping them busy. This is why Mr. Croft kept him, for in this capacity he was indispensable. As Mr. Croft was a mild gentleman, and never used any harsh language, I often thought that, as there was much about a rock quarry to provoke a man, he kept old Tommy to do the cursing for him. I never did hear him reprove or correct the old scalawag for his bad language.

The old fellow seemed to have it in for me. It mattered

not what went wrong about the works he would light into me. He would curse round and about the Irishmen when in his violent moods, but never directly at them. I was a boy learning a trade and he ran no risk in directing his ugly words at me. I made very good progress and after I was there some months I was a fairly good stonedresser for an apprentice. But I was not an expert by any means. I was still a trifle awkward in the use of the hammer and often I would strike my forefinger and thumb and have the skin all knocked off of them. Old Tommy observed this one day and with some of his select profanity he told me it was a pity that I did not let the hammer fall on my head instead of on my hand. When he turned to go to some other part of the works one of the old Irishmen said to me: "Me boy, ye has taken enough off'n the old divil and, be gorry, ye ought to let drive your hammer at his old head." I felt like the advice was good, but I was anxious to finish my trade and be independent and so determined to submit to his abuse at all hazards.

By and by I was well advanced in my work and thought I was making good headway and I became much better pleased with myself than old Tommy was pleased with me or my work. He would find fault with it despite my effort to put up a good job. The more I tried to please him the less pleased he became. He was determined not to like me or anything I tried to do. The brunt of his abuse kept falling on me, it made no difference whether I was to blame or not. When others made him angry he would vent his spleen on me. I grew tired of it. In fact, I had been tired of it for some time, and the old Irishmen who were always ready for a scrap gave me all sorts of private encouragement. They would tell me what they did for an old boss in the "auld country" and how it taught him some sense.

One day things went wrong in the yard and old Tommy foamed at the mouth and raved like a maniac. He threw his fiery old eyes on me and wanted to know why I was looking at him, and with some of his choicest profanity he fairly grew livid as he told me what he would do for me. It was more than I could stand. I sprang from the rock upon which I was seated and at work and with hammer drawn back I started toward him with a vicious look in my eye. The Irishmen cheered me on, but I did not need much cheering. The old fellow saw he was in for it and before I got in striking distance of him he turned and ran as hard as he could go to the office, and he told Mr. Croft that if he did not drive me from the works he would not stay with him another day. The old scamp was a coward and I proved it to the Irishmen and they were delighted. But it cost me my job. Mr. Croft called me in and told me that I ought not to have noticed the old man; that he was fractious, and while very provoking, he was harmless, and that I ought not to have replied to him. But since I had come to an open rupture with him I would have to go, for the old man was boss of the works and he had to be obeyed. So that wound up my career as a stonemason.

As I left old Tommy fired some of his select profanity at me, but he kept a good distance between us. I shouted back that if I ever caught him out of the quarry any time in the future I would settle with him in short order. The last I heard of the old rascal he was looking daggers at me and swearing vociferously. I threw my coat over my arm, picked up my dinner-bucket and disappeared from the quarry. I was never quite so angry in all my life. I had been somewhat at fault, but it was the result of gross injustice and I hate injustice to this good day. I resented it as a boy and I have always resented it as a man.

By the time I had walked about a mile I had begun to cool off and then I began to do some thinking, and the more I thought of it the more mortified I became over my situation. The fact is I was sorry that I had given way to my temper, even under the mean provocation. I wondered what mother would think when she learned the facts. She had so often exhorted me about self-control and she always advised me to submit to a wrong rather than to commit a second wrong in resenting a first one. And now I had not only given way to a hot temper, but I had endeavored to strike a man old enough for my grandfather. But I could not recall the incident and there was nothing left but to make the most of it. Before I reached home, however, I determined not to tell much if anything about the trouble and instead substitute another plan of life. I did not want to distress her and then, too, I did not want to let her know that I had been discharged. I could not believe that I had done wrong, but then it made me feel badly to think that mother would so regard it.

I loitered somewhat along the way in order to make my home-coming not far from the usual hour. It was Saturday afternoon, anyway, and when I arrived it did not excite inquiry. After supper I had a heart-to-heart talk with her about the tough sort of characters at the quarry and what a life of temptation it was among them. I told her if that was the nature of it while I was learning it, what would it be when I had finished my apprenticeship and entered upon my life career as a stonemason; that, among all of them whom I knew, not one of them was my sort of a man; that I thought there was something better in life for me than that of stonecutter; anyway. I also rehearsed to her the story of old Tommy's abuse toward me, and how hard it was to live in peace with him; and that in view of all the facts I had a notion of stop-

ping my part of it right then. At first she took the opposite view, but mildly so; for she did not see what else there was to do at that time, and that as I had nearly finished my trade, why not stick to it and prove to the world that one boy could make a sober and upright stonemason. We argued the question quite awhile, and when she saw that I was determined to give it up she wanted to know what I thought of doing.

I reminded her of the fact that her brother, living in North Georgia, had made us a visit nearly a year before and that he wanted us to move down there and live on one of his farms, and that he would help us out; but at that time we were doing so well with our good friend, that we did not care to break up and move so far. But now our friend was gone, and would it not be well for us to take up my uncle's proposition and move to Georgia? It would put us in a better community and under better influences, and it might be that down there I would have some chance to go to school. One thing certain I had no future where we were then living, and this change could not worst our condition. It might improve it.

She finally accepted my view of the situation and asked me when I thought we ought to make the move. I suggested that it was then the first of September and our crop was on hand and ready for the market, and that I had better go on down there and make arrangements for her to follow, after she had sold our corn; and if she agreed to it I would leave Monday morning. So that was the agreement. I was to go at once to Georgia.

Monday morning by four o'clock I was on a borrowed horse with my brother behind me to take the animal back home, with my belongings in an old-fashioned country satchel, a lunch sufficient for three meals and on my way fifteen miles to Mossy Creek to take the train. My destination from thence was

Dalton, and from there several miles into the country near Spring Place. I had never been that far from home in all my life and it seemed a long way. Really I had never been on a passenger train in my life. The whole experience was to be brand new to me. With my belongings in that satchel I had a Colt's navy pistol of a large make. It was an old weapon, and what under the sun I wanted with it is a mystery to me to this good day. I reached the station in time to catch the eleven-o'clock train. I purchased my ticket and boarded the car for the first time in my life. I had one lone lorn fifty-cent piece left in my depleted purse, and that was the sum and substance of my finances for the rest of the trip. As the train whizzed along I looked first at the people and then through the window at the country and thought over my journey and what was to come of it.

Darkness came on and my loneliness was intense. I knew nobody and nobody had spoken to me all day on that car, except the conductor when he called for my ticket. At nine o'clock we reached Dalton and disembarked. I had never been in a hotel. I saw one not far from the depot and went to it. I asked the clerk what he would charge me for a room that night and he said fifty cents. That was exactly my pile! I called for the accommodation, but before retiring I told him I wanted to leave very early the next morning for Spring Place and that I would pay him then, for no one would be up when I would leave. He smiled and took the silver half dollar. I went to my room, and solitude is no name for the room I occupied that night. I was a stranger in a strange land. I knew nobody and nobody knew or cared about me. After awhile I fell into a sound sleep and awoke bright and early the next morning. It was not good daylight. I arose and hastened downstairs, and there sat the same clerk whom I had

paid the night before. It had never dawned on me that a hotel clerk sat up all night. He spoke to me and I inquired for the Spring Place road. He gave me the direction, but suggested that I had better have breakfast before beginning my journey; but I knew better than he that I had nothing with which to pay for it, and I was confident it could not be had without money. I thanked him for his kindness and bade him good-bye in regular old country style.

It was not long until I was in the road and making tracks across the country to where my uncle lived. It was in 1866 and the marks of Sherman's march to the sea were everywhere visible. The country was very much out of repair and all around Dalton the earth was marked with breastworks. Every hill showed signs of war. Much of the fencing had not been restored and here and there I could see blackened chimneys still standing. After I had gotten out a few miles I stopped and took that old pistol with its belt and scabbard out of my satchel and buckled the war paraphernalia around my person on the outside of my coat. Just why I did this I cannot explain. I must have looked a caution in my homespun suit and rural air trudging along that highway with that old army pistol fastened around me. In going down a hill toward a ravine from which there was another hill in front of me I met two men horseback. They spoke to me and eyed me very curiously, but, strang to say, I could not tell why. Why would not men eye such a looking war arsenal as that? There were two others riding down the hill in front of me, and as the first two passed me they stopped and looked back at the others and shouted: "Lookout, boys, he is loaded!"

I trudged persistently along, for I was a great walker. By and by I came to Conasauga River, a beautiful stream, and it was about seventy-five yards wide or nearly so. I looked



"Look Out, Boys, He's Loaded!"

up the stream and saw a shallow shoal not far away and I soon wended my way to it, stripped off and forded it. By eleven o'clock I was in the town of Spring Place, a country village of three hundred people, situated upon rolling red hills; and they were just about as non-progressive as any people I have ever met before or since. I walked up in front of the easy-going little old tavern, with a rickety front porch, the place where the idlers of the village gathered for gossip. Several of them were there, and the leading man among them was the innkeeper, by the name of O'Connell, a sloven Irishman of huge proportions. He wore a pair of indifferent trousers, a soiled shirt whose bosom was well bespattered with tobacco juice and an old linen duster. Both corners of his mammoth mouth were smeared with the weed. My appearance with that army gun fastened around me touched off his fountain of humor and he threw back his shaggy head and roared like the bray of a hungry donkey on a late stubble-field. That was the signal and I soon found myself the center of more fun than that little lazy old village had enjoyed in many a day. They addressed all sorts of questions to me and made me the butt of their stale ridicule until they were satisfied and then, nothing daunted by my treatment, I asked the way to my uncle's, calling him by name. One of them gave me the directions, and it was three miles further on. As I moved off they were still hilarious over my advent and I could hear them for some time as I moved away.

In the course of an hour I was at my uncle's. He was surprised to see me, but gave me a cordial welcome. The first thing he did was to disarm me, and that ended my pistol-toting. I have never had one about my person or home to this good day. And I never will understand just why I had that one. A good dinner refreshed me and I soon unfolded

my plans and they were satisfactory to my kind-hearted kinsman. He was in the midst of cotton-picking and that afternoon I went to the field and, with a long sack about my waist, had my first experience in the cottonfield. I had seen small patches of it in East Tennessee, but never before had I seen fields of the staple. It was a new business to me, but I had never tackled a job that I could not master, except to learn the trade of a stonemason under old Tommy Thorn.

Well, as I have again referred to that old reprobate I will just jump forward over several long years and relate the circumstances of my last and final experience with him.

Nearly twenty years had gone by since my leaving the rock quarry with vengeance in my heart. I had not thought of him in a long time, but I had not entirely forgotten him. At the time now mentioned I was pastor of Church Street Church, Knoxville, Tennessee. One day it occurred to me to revisit the old haunts of my boyhood. I still had relatives there. And as I would be near the grave of my father I concluded to set up a suitable memorial with which to mark his long-neglected grave.

As I was well acquainted through Conference association with the Methodist pastor in charge of that work I corresponded with him and he announced my coming and had an appointment for me to preach at the old Bethcar Church. I went up some days before and visited the neighborhood. Most of the old people had gone to their last resting-place and the young ones had grown up until I had to be introduced to them, though many of them still remembered me as a boy among them.

On Saturday before Sunday I sent an old negro, who knew the location of the grave of my father, to the graveyard to put it in good condition. He founud another close to it and in

order to be sure of the right one he put both of them in repair. Three or four relatives went with me to see that the stone was properly set, and I noticed what appeared to be the new grave close to the one so dear to me and asked about it. One of my companions thought a moment and then said: "Oh, don't you remember old Tommy Thorn, who used to boss old Brother Croft's rock quarry? He was buried right there some years ago and that old negro fixed it up along with your father's this morning."

Then memory got into active operation. That Saturday evening in the long ago and the old rock quarry came trooping up and the scene of other days stood out before me in life-measure. I heard the profanity of old Tommy; I recalled the drawn hammer in my hand, and almost felt the stirring of the anger that resented his injustice. I heard Mr. Croft tell me that I was discharged, and I saw my form threading the wooded path to my mother's humble cottage home. And then I thought maybe that incident was providential after all. Had it not been for old Tommy's dislike toward me and by discharge from the stoneyard, what would have become of me? I realized that the mortifying episode of the years long gone had been the turning point in my life. Instead of its having wrought to my detriment, it had changed the channel of my life into another and a better current.

I turned to my friend and said: "Yes, I remember old Tommy. He made an impression once upon my mind that I shall never be able to forget. The probability is I owe more to him than to most any other one man. He did not mean it for my good, and it was not his purpose to aid Providence in looking after me; but had he been kind and patient with me I would not be here to-day as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when you first told me that this is his

grave my first impulse was to dig him up and move him to another place. But—no, God has disposed of the poor old fellow; and I hold no ill-will against him. The last time I saw him I did not dream that in later years I would find him sleeping so close to my father."

Just at that juncture this same friend looked up and said: "Yonder comes old Brother Croft, too! He has changed a great deal, but he is the same old man whom you used to know. I am going to see if he will know you."

As I glanced around I saw an old gentleman with beard as white as snow, his face wrinkled, his form bent and his step halting and feeble. Of course he did not recognize me.

He said: 'What is going on here? Anybody dead? I had not heard of it."

My friend told him that we were only repairing Colonel Rankin's grave and putting a stone over it. And he then asked him if he knew the man standing before him. He shook his head. Then I was introduced to him. He at once recalled me and said: "I remember your father well; he was a friend of mine. I was here when he was buried. I also remember your mother and your smaller brother and sister. You worked awhile in my rock quarry, didn't you? But that has been a long time ago. I am now an old and broken man. My family are nearly all gone. I am most alone. Oh, how the years fly! And you are now a preacher? Well, well; what changes come to us! We never know what's in a boy. You are going to preach for us to-morrow? Well, I am certainly glad to meet you again and I will surely hear you in the morning. By the way, whose new grave is that by your father's?"

I told him that I had just been informed that it was old Tommy Thorn's. He looked surprised for the moment, but

recovered himself and said: "Why, it looks like a new grave, and I did not recognize it. Yes, I buried old Tommy there eight years ago. He died at my house. I am the only friend he had for years. He was a curious old fellow, but away down in his heart he was not as bad as he seemed on the outside. Whiskey ruined him. It will ruin any man who sticks to it. I knew him back in England. He belonged to a good family and they were friends of ours, and so I kept him many years. You remember old Tommy, don't you?"

I told him that I had a very vivid recollection of the old man and that I was surprised to find him after all these years sleeping near my father. But that it was all right, for the grave blotted out all old scores and the passing years had healed the wounds that once gave pain.

The next day for miles the people came to the old Church in throngs. It was a beautiful morning in May—an East Tennessee morning in this beautiful springtime. The foliage and the flowers were in their glory and the wildwoods were resounding with the songs of the birds. Nearly all the faces before me looked strange. The most of the people whom I knew in the vanished years were sleeping near by in the churchyard. Hallowed memories of other days crowded my mind. There was a mellowness of sentiment in my heart and my thoughts went upward to that other land where the good had gathered, and an inspiration seized me. It was a great day in old Bethcar Church. Old Brother Croft, in his feebleness, came into the pulpit and clasped me in his arms and wept on my shoulders. It was a time for praise and rejoicing.

CHAPTER VII

My Conversion and Call to the Ministry

After disposing of my experience with old Tommy I will resume the thread of my story. It was late in the afternoon and I was tired. Dragging that long bag after me and bending over picking cotton had me well-nigh exhausted. Then it was that my uncle suggested that we take in the wagon and feed the mules, get an early supper and all go out to Church, as there was a good revival in progress.

Center Valley was the name of the Church and was two miles from where he lived. Going to Church was something rather new for me. While my mother was a strict member of the Methodist Church and while she had brought me up under very strict religious tutelage, yet since the death of my father she had not lived within reach of her place of worship and she had attended very rarely upon the service. Since I had left my old grandfather's home I had known but little about Church-going. And my recollection about his Church service did not appeal to me. But, as I soon learned, my uncle was a very religious man and very faithful in his Church duties. However, it was something out of the ordinary for me. As to revivals, I could not recall the last one I had attended. So I was not enthusiastic in my desire to go to this one. I was an entire stranger, was tired from the long

walk in the forenoon and that new experience in the cotton-field had taxed me. I wanted to go to bed and get some needed rest. But my uncle was insistent and I went more to please him than out of any desire of my own.

After the team had been fed and we had been to supper we put the mules to the wagon, filled it with chairs and we were off to the meeting. When we reached the locality it was about dark and the people were assembling. Their horses and wagons filled up the cleared spaces and the singing was already in progress. My uncle and his family went well up toward the front, but I dropped into a seat well to the rear. It was an old-fashioned Church, ancient in appearance, oblong in shape and unpretentious. It was situated in a grove about one hundred yards from the road. It was lighted with old tallow-dip candles furnished by the neighbors. It was not a prepossessing-looking place, but it was soon crowded and evidently there was a great deal of interest. A cadaverous-looking man stood up in front with a tuning fork and raised and led the songs. There were a few prayers and the minister came in with his saddlebags and entered the pulpit. He was the Rev. W. H. Heath, the circuit rider. His prayer impressed me with his earnestness and there were many amens to it in the audience. I do not remember his text, but it was a typical revival sermon, full of unction and power.

At its close he invited penitents to the altar and a great many young people flocked to it and bowed for prayer. Many of them became very much affected and they cried out distressingly for mercy. It had a strange effect on me. It made me nervous and I wanted to retire. Directly my uncle came back to me, put his arm around my shoulder and asked me if I did not want to be religious. I told him that I had always had that desire, that mother had brought me up that way, and

really I did not know anything else. Then he wanted to know if I had ever professed religion. I hardly understood what he meant and did not answer him. He changed his question and asked me if I had ever been to the altar for prayer, and I answered him in the negative. Then he earnestly besought me to let him take me up to the altar and join the others in being prayed for. It really embarrassed me and I hardly knew what to say to him. He spoke to me of my mother and said that when she was a little girl she went to the altar and that Christ accepted her and she had been a good Christian all these years. That touched me in a tender spot, for mother always did do what was right; and then I was far away from her and wanted to see her. Oh, if she were there to tell me what to do!

By and by I yielded to his entreaty and he led me forward to the altar. The minister took me by the hand and spoke tenderly to me as I knelt at the altar. I had gone more out of sympathy than conviction, and I did not know what to do after I bowed there. The others were praying aloud and now and then one would rise shoutingly happy and make the old building ring with his glad praise. It was a novel experience to me. I did not know what to pray for, neither did I know what to expect if I did pray. I spent the most of the hour wondering why I was there and what it all meant. No one explained anything to me. Once in awhile some good old brother or sister would pass my way, strike me on the back and tell me to look up and believe and the blessing would come. But that was not encouraging to me. In fact, it sounded like nonsense and the noise was distracting me. Even in my crude way of thinking I had an idea that religion was a sensible thing and that people ought to become religious intelligently and without all that hurrah. I presume that my ideas were

the result of the Presbyterian training given to me by old grandfather. By and by my knees grew tired and the skin was nearly rubbed off my elbows. I thought the service never would close, and when it did conclude with the benediction I heaved a sigh of relief. That was my first experience at the mourner's bench.

As we drove home I did not have much to say, but I listened attentively to the conversation between my uncle and his wife. They were greatly impressed with the meeting, and they spoke first of this one and that one who had "come through" and what a change it would make in the community, as many of them were bad boys. As we were putting up the team my uncle spoke very encouragingly to me; he was delighted with the step I had taken and he pleaded with me not to turn back, but to press on until I found the pearl of great price. He knew my mother would be very happy over the start I had made. Before going to sleep I fell into a train of thought, though I was tired and exhausted. I wondered why I had gone to that altar and what I had gained by it. I felt no special conviction and had received no special impression, but then if my mother had started that way there must be something in it, for she always did what was right. I silently lifted my heart to God in prayer for conviction and guidance. I knew how to pray, for I had come up through prayer, but not the mourner's bench sort. So I determined to continue to attend the meeting and keep on going to the altar until I got religion.

Early the next morning I was up and in a serious frame of mind. I went with the other hands to the cottonfield and at noon I slipped off in the barn and prayed. But the more I thought of the way those young people were moved in the meeting and with what glad hearts they had shouted their

praises to God the more it puzzled and confused me. I could not feel the conviction that they had and my heart did not feel melted and tender. I was callous and unmoved in feeling and my distress on account of sin was nothing like theirs. I did not understand my own state of mind and heart. It troubled me, for by this time I really wanted to have an experience like theirs.

When evening came I was ready for Church service and was glad to go. It required no urging. Another large crowd was present and the preacher was as earnest as ever. I did not give much heed to the sermon. In fact, I do not recall a word of it. I was anxious for him to conclude and give me a chance to go to the altar. I had gotten it into my head that there was some real virtue in the mourner's bench; and when the time came I was one of the first to prostrate myself before the altar in prayer. Many others did likewise. Two or three good people at intervals knelt by me and spoke encouragingly to me, but they did not help me. Their talks were mere exhortations to earnestness and faith, but there was no explanation of faith, neither was there any light thrown upon my mind and heart. I wrought myself up into tears and cries for help, but the whole situation was dark and I hardly knew why I cried, or what was the trouble with me. Now and then others would arise from the altar in an ecstasy of joy, but there was no joy for me. When the service closed I was discouraged and felt that maybe I was too hard-hearted and the good Spirit could do nothing for me.

After we went home I tossed on the bed before going to sleep and wondered why God did not do for me what he had done for mother and what he was doing in that meeting for those young people at the altar. I could not understand it. But I resolved to keep on trying, and so dropped off to sleep.

The next day I had about the same experience and at night saw no change in my condition. And so for several nights I repeated the same distressing experience. The meeting took on such interest that a day service was adopted along with the night exercises, and we attended that also. And one morning while I bowed at the altar in a very disturbed state of mind Brother Tyson, a good local preacher and the father of Rev. J. F. Tyson, now of the Central Conference, sat down by me and, putting his hand on my shoulder, said to me: "Now I want you to sit up awhile and let's talk this matter over quietly. I am sure that you are in earnest, for you have been coming to this altar night after night for several days. I want to ask you a few simple questions." And the following questions were asked and answered:

"My son, do you not love God?"

"I cannot remember when I did not love him."

"Do you believe on his Son, Jesus Christ?"

"I have always believed on Christ. My mother taught me that from my earliest recollection."

"Do you accept him as your Savior?"

"I certainly do, and have always done so."

"Can you think of any sin that is between you and the Savior?"

"No, sir; for I have never committed any bad sins."

"Do you love everybody?"

"Well, I love nearly everybody, but I have no ill-will toward any one. An old man did me a wrong not long ago and I acted ugly toward him, but I do not care to injure him."

"Can you forgive him?"

"Yes, if he wanted me to."

"But, down in your heart, can you wish him well?"

"Yes, sir; I can do that."

"Well, now let me say to you that if you love God, if you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin and if you love your fellowmen and intend by God's help to lead a religious life, that's all there is to religion. In fact, that is all I know about it."

Then he repeated several passages of Scriptures to me proving his assertions. I thought a moment and said to him: "But I do not feel like these young people who have been getting religion night after night. I cannot get happy like them. I do not feel like shouting."

The good man looked at me and smiled and said: "Ah, that's your trouble. You have been trying to feel like them. Now you are not them; you are yourself. You have your own quiet disposition and you are not turned like them. They are excitable and blustery like they are. They give way to their feelings. That's all right, but feeling is not religion. Religion is faith and life. If you have violent feeling with it, all good and well, but if you have faith and not much feeling, why the feeling will take care of itself. To love God and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, turning away from all sin, and living a godly life, is the substance of true religion."

That was new to me, yet it had been my state of mind from childhood. For I remembered that away back in my early life, when the old preacher held services in my grandmother's house one day and opened the door of the Church, I went forward and gave him my hand. He was to receive me into full membership at the end of six months' probation, but he let it pass out of his mind and failed to attend to it.

As I sat there that morning listening to the earnest exhortation of the good man my tears ceased, my distress left me, light broke in upon my mind, my heart grew joyous, and before I knew just what I was doing I was going all around

shaking hands with everybody, and my confusion and darkness disappeared and a great burden rolled off my spirit. I felt exactly like I did when I was a little boy around my mother's knee when she told of Jesus and God and Heaven. It made my heart thrill then, and the same old experience returned to me in that old country Church that beautiful September morning down in old North Georgia.

I at once gave my name to the preacher for membership in the Church, and the following Sunday morning, along with many others, he received me into full membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It was one of the most delightful days in my recollection. It was the third Sunday in September, 1866, and those Church vows became a living principle in my heart and life. During these forty-five long years, with their alternations of sunshine and shadow, daylight and darkness, success and failure, rejoicing and weeping, fears within and fightings without, I have never ceased to thank God for that autumnal day in the long ago when my name was registered in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Throughout those years of vicissitude and conflict and struggle I have had my ups and my downs, my doubts and fears; but even in the midst of my fiercest temptations and many discouragements I have always reverted to that day's act as the wisest in my history. I made a complete surrender of mind and heart, soul and body, to Christ and put the whole of self upon his altar. As I look back I regret that my service has been so feeble and inefficient, but in some respects it has been the best I could do. In it all and through it all I look to Christ as my merit and hope. Whatever have been my failures and my imperfections and shortcomings the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from sin. It is nothing of merit in

what I have done or tried to do, or failed to do; but it is His transcending grace that saves me.

When I stood before that altar in the long vanished years, young, inexperienced, without fortune or influential friends, uneducated, far away from the scenes of my birth and boyhood environment, with mysterious aspirations struggling in my heart and strange sensations stirring in my spirit, life to me was a prophecy. Its unfulfilled dreams and anticipations were hidden in the mists and the clouds of the unborn years. But to-day that far-off outlook of prophecy has been unfolded and its record has gone into history; and as I turn my eye toward the sunset my conviction becomes deeper and deeper, and if I had a thousand lives to live I would gladly dedicate them all to the service of Christ.

True, I have nothing in the way of wealth or fortune to show for my struggle and conflict and self-denial, but I have faith in God and in his Son, Jesus Christ; and my hope of Heaven is bright and glowing. These I would not exchange for the wealth of the world and the transient glory of human vanity. Yes, nearly half a century ago, poor, unknown and untrained, I entered into vital connection with the Church of God in an obscure rural neighborhood, and it was an occasion pregnant with tremendous significance to me.

As we returned home the sun shone brighter, the birds sang sweeter and the autumn-time looked richer than ever before. My heart was light and my spirit buoyant. I had anchored my soul in the haven of rest, and there was not a ripple upon the current of my joy. That night there was no service and after supper I walked out under the great old pine trees and held communion with God. I thought of mother, and home, and Heaven.

Before retiring I sat down and wrote mother all about my



LITTLE MARY FRANCES STEVENS, Deceased

SHE WAS AS SWEET AS THE MUSIC OF SONG,
AND AS BEAUTIFUL AS THE FLOWERS OF MAY



experience and told her that I had made a public profession of religion; that I had that day been received into the Church; that I had made peace with God, and that I was happy in his service. I told her that whatever his will concerning me might be I was ready to obey, and that henceforth my life would be that of a devoted Christian.

When I threw myself down to rest that night the thought came to me: Life now is to be service as well as happiness. If God has anything for me to do I must find it out and set myself to the task. There is not much that I can do, but whatever it is I must be about it. And then strange sensations moved me, like those I experienced back in Tennessee as I sat upon the fence one morning and looked out over my growing corn. This time I suspected their meaning, but was not sure of their interpretation. Like young Samuel, when sleeping near old Eli, I heard a faint voice, but thought that it was only my imagination, and then went into a sound sleep.

The next day I was busy about my farm work. My uncle had been so kind to me, and took such an interest in me, that I already felt very much at home. He trusted me from the word go. It was not long until I led in all the work to be done, such as breaking the ground for wheat, cleaning out the fence-rows, ginning the cotton and taking it to market. In fact, I became indispensable to him.

As the winter approached he went up and moved mother down, and we were soon in our own rented home and happy in our family union. She and myself took time about in conducting family prayers, and we read the Bible together at spare times. I attended prayer service regularly, though it was a walk of two miles. In time I got to leading in the public devotions, and those strange sensations in my deeper spiritual nature grew more defined. We had a good country



Sunday-school, and I attended that with punctuality. When the revival season approached I was present. We organized a grove meeting just preceding every night service and though it greatly embarrassed me they called on me to lead in prayer. I did my best and had times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. It was a great joy to me to see the people go to the altar and to talk to them.

Thus step by step I was led into active work in the Church. I was exceedingly timid and to say anything in public was almost like taking the breath out of me, but I did not shirk any duty. Doubtless what I had to say was stammering and often void of much meaning; for my education was limited, having been neglected entirely since my father's death. I could read and write and understood the rudiments of arithmetic.

My father had left a class of good books, such as histories and biographies and a few religious volumes, and these I had faithfully read. My uncle had a fairly good library and I had access to that. Then we had bought an excellent class of books for our Sunday-school library, and I drew one of them every other Sunday. So I was reasonably well informed for my years and opportunities.

I had always been fond of hearing intelligent men talk and had picked up a good deal of information in that way. I had one book of temperance lectures and I almost mastered it. Fleetwood's Life of Christ was very interesting to me. All my idle moments, which were not many except on nights and rainy days, I devoted to reading. Of course the Bible was my staple. Hence I was often called upon to make talks and to lead in public prayer. In addition to these few advantages the young men of the neighborhood, along with a few of the older ones, organized a debating society and once a month

we would meet and have joint discussions. They were awkward and often ludicrous affairs, but they accustomed us to speak in public.

In the late spring the county Sunday-school organization arranged for a union rally at the old campground and each school was to have its banner and its orator. Center Valley Sunday-school was noted in that section as an excellent school. The young ladies made us a banner and I was elected orator. When the day came we turned out in force, had marches and counter-marches and had singing. Then we assembled under the large pavilion for the addresses. Two of the ministers made the leading addresses, and then the school orators were called for and one other and myself were the only ones to respond. His speceh was short and inconsequential. Then I was introduced. At first my heart was in my mouth, but I had taken the last chapter in Fleetwood's Life of Christ, which was a summing up of the progress and triumphant results of Christ's kingdom in the world. I had run it through my own mental mold as far as possible and had a right creditable oration. When once I got well started and forgot myself I did rather more than ordinary for a green country boy. Our school was delighted with my effort and I received many compliments. It did one thing for me, and that was to convince me that I could talk in public, despite my timidity. By this time I was well known in our entire community and somewhat throughout the county.

I was exceedingly fond of Church service. I would go with our circuit preacher to his nearest appointments and was often called upon to close the services with prayer. I never missed a Quarterly Conference, and the Sunday service following it.

We had some fine men on our district. Rev. W. P. Harri-

son, D. D., was one of them, and I used to ride twenty miles to hear him preach. I then thought him the greatest preacher in the world. He was the greatest I had ever heard. He was a scholarly man; it seemed to me that he knew everything. He had the look of a student. He was eloquent. His voice was soft and tender and sweet. His manner was grace itself, and his whole appearance was that of the orator. I shall never forget one sermon I heard him preach at Hostler's Chapel. His text was the first seven verses of the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, beginning with the verse: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The outline and substance of that sermon will abide with me forever.

Then, too, the old Murray County Campground was a rallying place for the Methodists. Distinguished preachers used to visit the meeting, such as Atticus G. Haygood, W. J. Scott, H. Adams, R. W. Bigham, George W. Yarborough, George G. Smith and a host of others. Their ministrations were an inspiration to me and I feasted on their sermons many a day after the meeting had closed.

I noticed in the Southern Christian Advocate that Bishop George F. Pierce was to hold the District Conference at Dalton and dedicate the new Methodist Church at that place at a date not far in the future. I resolved to make it convenient to hear him preach once during that gathering, for I felt confident that no other Bishop would ever come that close to me again, and the opportunity must not go by unimproved. So when the time approached my arrangements were made. Early one morning my wagon was loaded with a few products for sale, and I was on my way for the occasion of my life.

I arrived in good time, disposed of my products and hitched my team in the wagonyard and slipped around to the Church

The conference had adjourned for recess just before preaching. I hastened in to get me a seat, and then I began to look for the Bishop. My expectations were high. Just what his appearance would be I could not well imagine, but it would be something extraordinary. I was confident that a Bishop was no ordinary man.

Directly I saw the Presiding Elder enter with a man leaning on his arm and I instinctively recognized Bishop Pierce. He was the handsomest man physically I had ever seen. There was something almost angelic in his face, and there was a charm in his movement as he walked down the aisle. When he entered the pulpit and announced his hymn, what a voice! There was a rhythm that thrilled me. His prayer brought heaven and earth together and it brought the audience into rapport with the preacher. My whole nature was subdued. There was a mellowness in my heart that I could not describe And when he took his text and began his sermon it was but a few minutes until he had the congregation in the third heaven. Nothing like it had ever fallen upon my ears. My feelings almost ran riot and I fairly became unconscious of my surroundings. As he proceeded the preachers got happy, a number of them shouted aloud and it seemed to me that the scenes of the Day of Pentecost were being repeated. When he swept into his conclusion the whole audience almost lost self-control and "heaven came down our souls to greet, and glory crowned the mercy seat".

As soon as the benediction was pronounced I hastened out, went to my team and started for home. My dream had come true. I had heard a Bishop and even my expectations had been surpassed. I had never imagined anything like I had heard that day. When I reached home that night I had wonderful things to tell mother. I went in the strength of that

meat for weeks to come.

It was not the exuberance of my youthful imagination that had carried me away. It so turned out that I heard Bishop Pierce in my maturer years, and his ministration made about the same impression and produced the same effect upon the audience. In many respects he was the most wonderful preacher that American Methodism has ever produced. Not the greatest in his scholarship, or in the profundity of his thought, or in the analysis of his theme, but in that wonderful something called eloquence. In voice, in magnetism, in ease, in dignity, in diction, in the wealth of his imagery, he was without a peer.

In this way and throughout these experiences God was leading me and I knew it not. And as I would revert to these few great sermons and their effect upon me those strange feelings of which I have spoken would stir my heart and creep into my mind. Just what they meant I could not fully divine. I would think of them and would have longings to know why they were ever and anon intruding themselves into my conscious being.

One Sunday afternoon on my way back from a Quarterly Conference, where we had licensed a young man to preach, those unaccountable promptings arrested my attention more and more. So that night I told mother about those strange suggestions. She listened to me attentively and then remarked: "My son, maybe the Lord is calling you to preach." And she related the story of Samuel, and continued: "I have been watching you closely and I have been impressed that there was something on your mind, and I have suspected more than once that God was dealing specially with you."

It almost appalled me. My pulse quickened and for several moments I sat in silence. I had suspected as much myself,

but concluded time and again that it was my imagination, for such a thing looked almost absurd to me.

I would not allow myself to think of those peculiar experiences only for the time being and then dismiss them. But now mother had interpreted them to me, and the earnestness of her words and her manner had driven the idea into the very depths of my soul. The realization alarmed me. How could it be true? I was only an ignorant boy, had not been to school since the death of my father, and there was not the slightest prospect for my being able to go to school. To think of being called to preach, in view of the facts in my case, was more than I could make myself believe to be true.

Finally I opened up my heart to mother and admitted to her that I was afraid she had properly sized up the situation. But how in the world could I think of entering the ministry? I not only had no education and no hope of being able to go to school, but that she needed every day of my toil in order to help the family to live. She looked at me rather pleadingly and said: "My son, if God has called you to the ministry he will surely provide a way for you to prepare for it. You go along and do your duty, doubting nothing, and do not resist him. Be prayerful and obedient and watch the openings of Providence. He will be sure to work it out for you in some way."

That was just like mother, for she never doubted. Her faith was of that simple and tenacious kind. It was absolutely childlike. With that conversation ringing in my ears and her sublime faith standing out before me I retired that night and did some of the most anxious thinking of my life. All those strange sensations and mysterious thoughts that had troubled me for months rushed in upon me and almost staggered me with their directness. They took on the form of a command,

and I settled down in the firm belief that God wanted me to preach. It was not long until all doubt was gone and the matter was settled. But I kept those things in my own heart and told them to no one but mother and the good Father above, whom I was trusting implicitly. I did not think it best to say anything to the Church about them, not even to my preacher. It would be time enough to do this when Providence cleared up the way and made it possible for me to make some preparation for so stupendous a calling. If it should turn out that no way was opened up before me, then the responsibility would not be mine, and the whole matter could drop without any fault of my own. That part of it was God's and I was determined to do my best and let him take care of the impossible. That was mother's advice, and I was sure that she knew what was best; and right there I determined to rest my whole case. Then a hallowed peace came into my heart. My mind had surcease from anxiety and solicitude. The battle had been fought and the victory had been won. It was a happy moment with me.

CHAPTER VIII

An Unlooked-For Providential Opening

My brother and myself put in our first crop in Georgia the next spring and it grew off well. That hillside land was not fertile like the Tennessee bottom land I had been used to, but with proper care it did very well. We gave it earnest attention and kept it well cultivated. As the summer approached the cotton, the corn and the cowpeas looked flourishing, and we were gratified. Nothing pleased me more than to see the fruits of my industry responding to my generous toil.

It made my heart swell with becoming gratitude, for there was not a lazy bone in my body. I had developed into a strong and robust fellow and felt that I was almost equal to any man's task. We were up early, and with the rising of the sun we were in the field with plow and hoe and from the dawn till the noon hour we lost no time. An hour for dinner and we were back until eventide, and then when night came on we slept the sleep of the just and found refreshment. My, what an appetite we enjoyed, and everything that mother cooked we relished and appropriated with keen pleasure! We had no luxuries, but we lacked nothing in the way of substantials.

There was an old gentleman living a mile from us who taught a three months' primary school, and my sister attended

it. His name was White, and he was a good school teacher for children. At the close of that school, toward the last of June, there was an exhibition in which the children were made to show off their proficiency and their parents (mostly their mothers) went out to encourage the little people. My mother went over and when the exercises were completed she hurried back home in order to have dinner ready for us. While at the stable feeding the mule I heard her voice in song as she was busying herself about the noon meal. But this was nothing unusual, for she often sang the songs of Zion as her hands were engaged in her daily tasks.

When I stepped into the kitchen her face was all aglow, and she turned to me and said: "My son, I am very happy to-day. I have found out how you can go to school, and as sure as you are born Providence has made the opening. I felt all the time that he would do it, but it has come sooner and in a way I did not expect. But he is always better to us than our fears and his mercies often astonish us. Sit down to dinner and I will tell you the good news. It is too good to be true, but I believe it is true and you will agree with me when I have told you. I have always trusted God and he has never disappointed me. He has often led me along ways that I would not have chosen, and he has brought many experiences to me not according to my liking, but he has never failed to make good in the end. All we have to do is to render him our best service and then follow wherever he leads. He will take care of the result. It is wonderful how he answers my prayers. He does not always answer them in the way I pray them, but he does answer them in his own time and in his own way."

As we proceeded with the meal she related to me the newly-discovered plan by which the way was to be opened for me

to go to school. I will let her tell it in her own simple way:

"I went over to Mr. White's school to hear your sister recite and to come back with her. The schoolhouse was about full of people. When everything was over Mr. White said that he was glad to say there was present that morning a famous teacher from Bradley County, Tennessee; that he was visiting Mr Brewer's family, for Mr. Brewer years before had been one of his students; and he was sure that the people present would be glad to hear from Professor M. H. B. Burkett.

"The old man arose and made one of the best speeches I ever heard. He spoke on education; told what it was and how it could be gotten. He said that it did not always take money to go to school. If a boy had some money it was well and good, but that if he was industrious and honest and truthful it was better. The boy who was not educated would always spend his life as a drawer of water and a hewer of wood for other people. It was the educated man who knew how to be independent and to plan and to think for himself. And that the time had come when any boy who was any account would have to educate himself. I was following him with all my heart, for I thought something would turn up for your good. He said all that anybody needed to get an education, if he had no money, was grit and determinaton. If he knew how to work and was willing the way was open.

"Right then I thought of you, and I knew that you had those gifts. I could hardly wait for him to go on and explain fully what he was driving at. And he said that he had a good academy in Bradley County, Tennessee, some thirty-five miles from there, out on a farm, and that he always took two or three boys every year and let them work their way and go to school to him. He pointed to Mr. Brewer and

said that was the way Sam did and he has made a pretty good sort of a man. Then he concluded by saying that if any of us knew a good, hard-working, honest boy in that community who would be willing to go to his place next fall and work his way through school, to send him up there and he would see him through.

"My heart liked to have jumped out of my mouth. I said to myself, I know that boy and he will sure be in that school when it begins the next time. I did not stop to speak to him, for he did not know me; but I rushed out and hastened home to have dinner ready for you and to tell you what I had heard. It is glorious!"

By the time she had finished I was as much excited as she was. For a year I had felt those stirrings of heart, but I was like a helpless bird beating its wings fruitlessly against the bars trying to gain its liberty. In other words, there was looming up before me during those anxious months a stone wall too high to scale and too dense to break through. Every time I would go up against it I would fall back helpless upon my own impotence and settle down almost in despair. There was no opening in it for me.

Day and night it stood there to vex me and prevent any progress. How my heart had cried out for help to break through it, or for some strong arm to lift me over its frowning heights. But no help had come and no strong arm had gotten underneath me. But at last I thought I saw a rent in that impassable wall. It seemed to me that the light at last was breaking through it, and that there was the touch of an unseen hand to strengthen me for the task of passing it. Or, to revert to my other figure of speech, though my wings felt sore from their helpless blows against the bars of the cage, now those bars were pressing apart, and just on the outside

I saw the beauties of the flowers and felt the inspiration of coming liberty. I was almost ready to fly! My spirit was as light as a feather.

That afternoon as I followed the plow I thought and thought over that wonderful story related at the dinner table by mother. It took complete possession of me. It ran through my mind like the music of song. By and by the other side of it began to appeal to me. I wondered if it were possible that mother, in her gladness, had not misunderstood the old man, and why did she not go up to him and tell him about me and get more of the facts in detail. Then again I thought if he does take two or three boys a term and let them work their way through, maybe he will find them long before he can hear from me, and after all it may be a dream.

Furthermore, how could a boy without a cent of money go to a stranger and ask to be permitted to accept his conditions? Surely such a boy will have to have a little money for books, provision and tuition. I had none and he never heard tell of me, and I did not know his address. So my heart began to oscillate between hope and despair. Yet there was a possibility in the hope and this encouraged me. It was the first time that even a possibility had presented itself to me. So I resolved that I would see what there was in it.

That night mother went over the whole field of that possibility with me. She was actually enthusiastic and she communicated some of her spirit to me. She swept all my misgivings out of the way, even the need that she had for me to make the living. She said by the first of September a good part of the crop would be gathered, and my brother and herself would attend to the rest of it. "Your uncle will give us some assistance, and next year we can find somebody to go in with us; and Thomas" (that was my brother's name)

"now understands work as well as you did back in Tennessee. Oh, we will get along! So we will just work to that end and when September comes everything will be ready for you to go to that school." She made me see it that way, and it was late that night before I closed my eyes in sleep.

A few Sunday afternoons later I dropped over to Mr. Brewer's and had a long talk with him about Mr. Burkett and his school. It had been some years since he had been under him, but he felt confident that I could win my way in his school. I told him nothing about my call to the ministry. That was a secret known to me and mother and God. I learned that the old gentleman was a local preacher in the Northern Methodist Church, and I asked Mr. Brewer if that would make any difference in my case. He did not think so. He advised me to make all my plans during the next two months so that my brother could finish up the crop, and that when I got ready to go to come over and he would give me a letter of introduction and commendation to the old professor.

That interview determined the question of my going to that school. It settled it once and for all as far as I was concerned. It was no longer an open question. It was the hand of Providence leading me and I was resolved to follow that leading. If there was any failure to develop it would not be upon my part. And this was mother's view of it from the moment she heard his speech. The whole thing was as clear to her mind as the noonday sun. It was already a crystallized fact in her mind, and in that way and with that sort of faith she discussed it.

The two summer months sped by and the cotton crop was made and partially gathered. The corn was about matured and its gathering provided for. Plans for the next year were in contemplation and the arrangement was satisfactory. The

long-looked-for month of September approached, a date big with meaning for me.

So one beautiful morning before good daylight I had told mother and my brother and sister good-bye and, with a well-filled satchel thrown across my shoulder, I was on my way to "Student's Home", the name of Professor Burkett's school.

The distance was about thirty-five miles, but what was that to a strong, determined country boy nearly eighteen years old and weighing one hundred and forty-nine pounds! It was mere moonshine. The day was a long one and by sunup I was well on my journey. I did not have a cent of money in my pocket, never had seen Professor Burkett and he had never heard tell of me, yet I was measuring off tracks in a rapid way toward his school.

As I trudged along through the dust of the road I had ample time for thinking, and I thought very seriously. Would the old man take me in my penniless condition and give me a chance? Now and then a fear would force itself upon me and I would become nervous. What would I say to him when I approached him? Thus I developed my line of remarks to him. I went over my speech time and again until I had it down pat. I knew exactly what I was going to say to him.

About this time I was standing on the bank of the river that crossed the road twelve miles from home and it looked rather formidable. There was a farmhouse not far away and I had some distant acquaintance with the people and they had a boat and a canoe tied with a chain to a tree. But they charged to put people across, and I had no money. The stream was a beautiful one, clear and inviting. What a place for fishing and bathing! But I was not out on a fishing expedition, nor for bathing purposes. I wanted to get myself on the opposite side as quickly as possible. I was not going to make known

my poverty to the owners of the boats, and the river was deep at that point. So I started upstream to see if I could not find a shallow place, and about half a mile I made the discovery. There was nobody in sight so I got on the outside of my homespun and, with my clothes and satchel across my shoulder, I waded in and was soon on the other side. I lost a little time in the operation, but it was not long until I regained the road and struck my old gait. The road was a direct one and I had no difficulty in keeping in the right way. The noon was past and I was beyond the halfway mark by several miles.

Within an hour of sundown I stood on a hillcrest and looked down upon a beautiful valley. The view was enchanting. The landscape stretched out for three or four miles beyond me and the undulating foothills in the distance were throwing their lengthening shadows back in my direction. The listlessness of a rural haze threw its weird effect upon the scene, while far away a railway train was speeding along, leaving a trail of smoke in its wake.

About that time a man rode up from the opposite direction and I asked him if he could tell me the location of Professor Burkett's school. He pointed off toward a clump of trees some two miles further down the valley and said it was just beyond them. It was not long until I was standing at his gate about fifty yards below his dwelling and his school building. A young man standing near by told me to come in, but I requested him to ask the old teacher to come down; I wanted to speak to him.

In a few minutes the old gentleman emerged from his door and came hurriedly down toward where I was standing. He was a man of medium height, quite fleshy, a little stooped from age and habits of study, had a big head covered with straggling gray hair and a long white beard. He wore glasses



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and his manner was nervous and his speech jerky and rather abrupt. His clothing was not the most tidy and he wore a long linen duster. He eyed me closely, and no wonder! My suit of clothing was crude, my coat fit me tightly, my trousers struck me above my shoetops, my feet were large and incased in brogans, my hair was rather long, my hands and face burned as brown as a mummy's and my manners were rural to the last degree. I was in great contrast to himself and he took me in at a glance from head to foot. I found myself very much embarrassed before I opened my mouth. I suppose it was only a moment that he looked at me and I at him, though it seemed like five or ten minutes.

"Burkett is my name; what can I do for you, sir?" were the first words he blurted out at me. I replied: "Mr. Burkett, my name is Rankin. I live in Murray County, Georgia, in the neighborhood where you visited Mr. Brewer two months ago. My mother is a widow. She heard your speech at the schoolhouse that day when you said that if a poor boy who knew how to work and was willing wanted an education you would let him work his way through your school. Now I am here without money, but I am used to work and I want to go to school. What can you do for me?"

He looked me over again and the following dialogue ensued:

"You say you live near Sam Brewer's where I visited awhile back?"

"Yes, sir; and I have a recommendation from him. Here it is."

He read it and looked at me severely.

"Sam Brewer is a fine fellow, and he speaks very kindly of you. Have you no money at all?"

"No, sir; not a dime."

"And you want to go to school?"

"Yes, sir; that is what I'm here for."

"Do you curse?"

"No, sir; I never swore an oath in my life."

"Do you chew tobacco?"

"No, sir; I never learned how."

"Do you smoke?"

"No, sir; I do not know its taste."

"Do you play cards?"

"No, sir; I don't know one from another."

"Do you know how to work?"

"Yes, sir. Look at these hands. That's all I do know."

"What can you do?"

"I can do anything on the farm. I can break ground; I can lay a fence-worm; I can plant and plow; I can dig ditches and chop wood; I can cradle wheat and oats. I can do anything of that kind that you want done."

"And you are willing to work your way through?"

"Yes, sir. It is the desire of my heart to go to school and that's the only way I can go."

"Are you a member of any Church?"

"Yes, sir; I am a member of the Methodist Church."

"And your mother heard that speech?"

"Yes, sir; and she went home and told me all about it. That's the way I found out about you."

"Well, I do not remember meeting her."

"No, sir; she did not introduce herself to you. She just went home as fast as she could to tell me."

"Well, come in. I think you are the boy I am looking for."

That was one of the happiest evenings of my life. I could have shouted for very joy. He did not turn me away. He was willing to give me a chance. My heart overflowed with gratitude. I felt like I was walking on thin air. The desire

of my life was to be gratified. I was actually going to get to go to school. I was nearly swept away with my emotions, and I was never very emotional. But that was too much for me. It touched the great deep of my nature.

I entered the old gentleman's home and deposited my baggage, bathed my face and hands and was invited out to supper. Just he and his wife and one daughter, about sixteen years of age, constituted his family at that time. His wife was a pale, delicate woman, with an incipient cancer on her face. She was gentle and uniform in her nature and quiet in her speech, just the opposite from her husband. He was the most excitable and blustery old man I ever knew. She was a sort of balance-wheel to him, but she did not always balance him. The daughter's name was Nettie, and she was a cross between her father and mother, rather good looking and richly endowed.

During the meal the old gentleman asked me a great many more questions and seemed bent on finding out everything possible about me. I frankly told him all I knew about myself. I concealed nothing. After supper I felt like I knew him fairly well, and he certainly knew me.

It was a beautiful night. The stars came out and bedecked the heavens, and the moon threw her silvery light down upon the earth, making it almost as light as day. The old gentleman invited me out for a walk. He took me all over his farm and told me all about how he wanted work done, and I scrupulously took in and remembered all that he said. I was bent on pleasing him. When we went back to the house and were seated on the front porch he told me what he would do; that he would let me have a shack of a dormitory, a sort of one-room house with simple furniture in it, all for a dollar per month. That I could occupy it, do my own cooking and

he would furnish me with work. I could work usually two hours in the morning, an hour at noon and two hours in the evening, and that he would allow me ten cents an hour, and that would be fifty cents per day. On Saturday I could work all day and make a dollar and a half, and he would let me have provisions and books and tuition at a reasonable price, and in that way go to school. He wanted to know if I was willing to undertake the enterprise on those terms. I replied that I most certainly was ready, and that I would go to work the next morning and be ready for school by the time it opened at nine o'clock. Thus we made the agreement.

I knew that I could live, pay for my books and my tuition at four dollars and a half per week without much trouble, but if I fell short at the end of some month I could drop out a day now and then and make it up; and in vacation I could get a little ahead. The whole thing looked mighty good to me. I went over to my shack near a number of others already occupied by boys in school and I tumbled into the rude bunk the most delighted eighteen-year-old chap in all that school. I slept through without waking, for I was tired.

At four o'clock the next morning I heard his bugle sound for rising. I soon found out that this was one of the inflexible rules. Every boy had to rise at that hour and put in good time on his books. He had an idea that the early hour was the best part of the day for study, and he was correct. I had no books, so I cleaned up my house, cooked a meager breakfast and by daylight was at the barn feeding and currying his horse and milking his cow. Then I lit into the woodpile and made the sound of the axe ring out on the air. Before school opened I had more than two hours to my credit.

There were two other boys there working their way through also, but they had other jobs. All the others, more

than seventy-five in number, were more fortunate, but they had the utmost respect for the three of us who had to work. He required this, even if they had been otherwise inclined. He had a large number of girls, and they had comfortable accommodations. But he allowed no communication between the sexes except in the schoolroom and in his presence. He was the strictest disciplinarian I have ever known. He was almost a fanatic on the question. He would brook no infraction of his rules. They were like the laws of the Medes and Persians; they were to be obeyed in the spirit and in the letter. To wantonly violate one of them was to incur the displeasure of a man of iron will and ferocious temper when once provoked. He was positively savage when disobedience was proven. If the offender was too large for punishment he had to leave the school without any respect to the order of his going, but if under size and age the strap was put to him with strength and vigor.

Professor Burkett was a self-made man. He had never been to college and his advantage in any sort of school in his early life was of the simplest sort. He took to teaching because he loved it, and he learned as he taught. He was not technically an educated man, neither was he systematically trained in his habits of thought and study. He had acquired all that he knew through main strength and awkwardness. Hence he was lacking in those elements of refinement and culture that go to finish the character of the really educated man. He was a stranger to self-poise and self-control. His will was imperious, and his manners brusque and at times rude. He was a bundle of impulses and sometimes these would play havoc with his judgment. Physically he was large, rotund and muscular, and in his younger days he was evidently a man hard to meet in a contest of strength. Age had weakened

his physical powers, but not his will and his impulsiveness. On the contrary, he had become more of an autocrat, and resistance very nearly set him wild. He simply ruled his school with a rod of iron.

Yet the old Professor, in his equipment, was practically an educated man. He was by nature richly endowed; he had a big brain, quick perception, a prodigious memory and great driving powers. He had mastered, in his way, all the branches of an English education, had gone into mathematics as far as trigonometry, and he had acquired a working knowledge of the rudiments of Greek and Latin. He literally prided himself in English grammar. Hence his course of study was substantial; and with all his incongruities he was a man of kind heart and tender sensibilities. When at his best he was a pleasant man to deal with. When once you understood him and learned how to cultivate his weak points, it was not a difficult matter to get along with him. For he was vain and egotistical, and from this side of his complex nature he was very accessible. Therefore I was not long in understanding him, and I had but little trouble in my efforts to manage him. I found out exactly how to get into his good graces and through this medium I cultivated him most assiduously.

The school was a revelation to me. There was nothing of the old field type about it. In a large measure it was up-to-date and furnished with all the modern appliances. He had a fairly good cabinet of minerals and a very good elementary laboratory. He had charts of every description; grammar charts, anatomy charts, geology charts and a large array of geography maps. He had good desks and seats, classrooms and a large chapel for public exercises. It was a good, practical school. When his classes were overly large he had an assistant teacher or teachers. He knew the art of teaching

and the best methods for making pupils study. They simply had to study. He was in deed and in truth a schoolmaster. No other term was applicable to him.

After my first morning's work was done the bell rang and the students marched in with the promptness and regularity of soldiers. There was no semblance of confusion. It was like clockwork. When they were all seated the old Professor, with authoritative manner, took his place on the platform. He had his secretary to call the roll. He then read a chapter from the Bible, announced a hymn and it was sung with zest and in good time. He led in a stately prayer. After that he announced, or rather repeated, a few simple rules for the government of the school, tapped the bell and the classes, with that same order, repaired to their respective places.

I sat there taking in the proceedings, for he had not given me a book or put me in a class. I was simply a spectator. I put in the remainder of the school hours in that way. I learned afterward that he wanted me to see the way things were done before he put me to doing them. So after the school hours were over he took me into his room, handed me my books and told me the classes to which I was assigned. One was Emerson's Mental Arithmetic; another one was Comstock's Natural Philosophy, and still another one was Clark's Grammar. There was a reader, a speller and a geography, but these were not formidable. The former three staggered me. Mental arithmetic bewildered me, and as to that book on philosophy, I looked at it in amazement. Clark's Grammar was a Chinese puzzle to me. It was a diagram system. I glanced at these books on my way to my shack and I saw that I had work to do.

After a simple meal of my own preparing I lighted a dingy lamp and tackled that arithmetic. The more I tried to analyze

its problems the less sense I could see in them. I laid it down and picked up Comstock. It was the first book of the kind I had ever seen, and it was a mystery to me. But when I opened that book on grammar I simply shook my head and laid it down. Yet that grammar, with its system of diagrams, was the pride of my old teacher. He knew the whole of it memoriter, as I afterwards learned. But to me it was without meaning. I thought over the situation and became discouraged, and my mind wandered over creation. I could not fix it on anything. I walked out and got a little fresh air and then returned and tumbled into my bed. I knew I could sleep if I could not do anything else.

CHAPTER IX

Some School Experiences at Student's Home

By the time the bugle sounded I was up trying to work on those books, but my mind was unable to comprehend them. They were not only beyond me, but worse still, I did not know how to study. I had not been trained to concentrate, and to think consecutively was out of the question. For more than five years I had been out of school, and while I had kept up some general reading, and had gathered a good degree of general information, yet I was a stranger to the student habit and life. The more I tried to understand the diagram system of that grammar the more it confused me, and that mental arithmetic was a stunner. I did not even know the meaning of the word philosophy.

So when I entered the schoolroom the next morning fear and trembling took hold of me. I feared the old Professor's displeasure and I dreaded the exposure of my ignorance before the class. But there was nothing left for me but to grit my teeth and meet the issue. By and by the grammar class to which I belonged was called and, to my surprise and chagrin, they were nearly all little girls from twelve to fourteen years of age. They had been in the school for a year or two and their memories had been well cultivated. As far as they had gone they had the letter of the book down fine.

I was almost a man in size. I felt like a crane among a flock of tomtits. My embarrassment began to rise to fever heat. The questions started and they were answered promptly, and then came my turn. The old gentleman asked me to take a pointer and indicate on the chart hanging on the wall the location of a substantive. He had just as well have asked me to point out the location of one of the planets in the solar system. I took the pointer and pointed at the first thing on the chart that loomed up before me. Strange to say, not a member of the class giggled at me. My confusion became confounded. Then the Professor shouted out: "Rachel, take that pointer from the greenhorn and show him that part of speech!" She made the effort, but she was not high enough to reach it, and then he commanded me to lift her up so that she could reach it. I obeyed, but none but myself will ever know my mortification.

Following this was arithmetic, and I had practically the same class, and just about the same embarrassment. When the philosophy class met most of them were larger and I felt a trifle more at ease, but before the lesson was over I was almost gone to pieces. I imagined that I was an object of absolute pity in the eyes of the members of that class. They seemed to be sorry for my embarrassment and my backwardness. That experience finished up my first effort in the classrooms that day. I felt positively relieved when the time came for me to go to the barnlot and the woodpile.

When the sun disappeared I repaired to my dormitory almost overwhelmed with discouragement. After all it seemed to me that my school prospect was dimmed, and I almost doubted my ability to do much in the way of education. It was not what I had thought and the gravity of my situation was appalling. I hastened to my shack, partook of a light

repast, closed the door, lighted my lamp and began to wonder. The more I dwelt upon the experiences of the day the deeper became my sense of humiliation and disgrace. I was very nearly ready to give up in despair.

While lost in these unpleasant reflections there was the noise of approaching footsteps coming in my direction and directly a fierce rap on the door. When I responded the door opened and in came Professor Burkett! His very presence produced a tremor in my bosom. My first thought was that he had come over, under the cover of night, to tell me that I had better go back home. But instead he spoke to me in a cheerful voice and asked me how I was feeling.

I broke down and almost cried as I told him the state of my mind and heart. He laughed heartily and said: "Tut, tut, tut! Why you have only learned the very lesson I wanted to teach you—a lesson that all inexperienced youngsters have to learn when they first enter my school. The first thing I try to do to them is to take all their conceit out of them. In the first place they have to learn that they know positively nothing, and usually that is the hardest lesson to teach them. I am glad that you are such an apt student. I am hopeful now of doing something for you. In the second place they have to learn how to study, and to acquire this lesson perfectly is also a very difficult task. It is not learned in a day or a week or a month. It takes a long time to master it. Now I see you have learned the first lesson thoroughly and much sooner than I had suspected. But you will be much longer learning the second one.

"To begin with, you must throw aside your false pride. You think you disgraced yourself to-day in the presence of those pupils and myself, but you did nothing of the kind. They had a similar experience when they began with me and

they understand your situation thoroughly. You imagine that I expected you to know those lessons, but you are mistaken. Had you been able to master them, then there would be no necessity for you to come to my school; but because you do not know how to study them is the reason you are here. Really I am much gratified with your beginning, and I now have hopes of doing something for you. Cheer up and take heart and you will soon know how to do things. Here are a couple of books; read them and they will help you out. They were of great assistance to me years ago. I owe much to them. Good-night."

And with this he left as abruptly as he had come.

After that interview my drooping spirit revived. It was not long until I began to examine those two books. One of them was "Todd's Student's Manual" and the other one was "Watts On the Mind". I glanced through them, and the former at once impressed me. It was an inspiration to me. It contained the very principles that soon discovered myself to me, told me of my faculties and how to use them and the best methods for learning how to study. I retired, for I needed rest after my day's experience. Bright and early the next morning I was poring over my geography lesson and soon had some idea of it, but the other books were hard for me to learn.

When school opened I was on hand. I listened attentively to the morning lecture, and when my classes one by one were called I took my seat as before, but just about as little prepared for the ordeal. How I did dread it! My little classmates looked like they were sorry for me. But imagine my relief when the old gentleman informed me that I would not be asked any questions that day; that he only wanted me to sit there and listen to the others and to watch the use they

made of the diagrams and the chart. After each lesson the Professor took special pains in explaining everything to me. The simplicity of the work began to impress itself on me and I saw through some of the problems with a degree of clearness.

That was Friday and I was beginning to feel some encouragement, but it did not last long, for that afternoon the whole student body assembled in the chapel for the close of the week's exercises. A couple of hours were devoted to making speeches and reading compositions. Professor Burkett had a way of his own in conducting exercises of that character. In fact, he had a way of his own in doing everything in his school.

After the set speeches and compositions had been delivered he would call on students promiscuously and without a word of warning to mount the stage and make an off-hand speech. It was very amusing to hear a raw fellow attempt to speak without any preparation. One of them appeared very awkward and bunglesome and his failure produced much merriment. I was enjoying the fun hugely.

But my fun was of short duration, for the old man threw his eye around the room and said: "We will now hear from Mr. Rankin, of Georgia." If a bomb had exploded under me my surprise would not have been greater. I was dumbfounded. I sat as one glued to his seat. The sterm old teacher would take no sort of excuse and he repeated his introduction of me with frowning emphasis. There was no alternative and, with my knees smiting each other from sheer fright, I mounted the rostrum; but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and I was so completely filled with breath that I could not utter a word.

The Professor told me to proceed and not to stand there like a dummy. This brought down the house, but it left me

standing there as helpless as ever. In a broken voice I managed to say: "Professor, I can't make a speech." "Well, then, you had better make a bow and take your seat," retorted the old man; and I never obeyed one of his commands with more alacrity. As I bobbed my head and retired to my place they all cheered me to the echo. I realized that I had made a spectacle of myself and felt embarrassed, but I had one comfort, and that was several others had not done much better than myself. Misery loves company and I had good companionship.

After the adjournment of school quite a number of the boys came around and congratulated me on my first effort at speaking and reminded me of the fact that such experiences were not uncommon in that school.

Among the students was a bright young fellow who had been under the tuition of the old teacher three or four years and he had been making a specialty of phrenology, and occasionally the boys would congregate in one of the rooms and Bob Rutherford would examine their heads, especially the new boys. He would take the boy, measure his head, place his hand upon the several bumps and call them by name and then decide whether or not he had any aptitude for study or any outlook for development.

I had to submit to this ordeal. It was not exactly hazing, but it was on that order. I was somewhat credulous and disposed to believe what was ordinarily told me and, in some sense, this was a serious matter to me. It was made such by those who witnessed the proceeding.

The fellow proceeded to measure my head from the forehead to the back, and from one ear to the other, and then he pressed his hands upon the protuberances carefully and called them by name. He felt my pulse, looked carefully at my com-

plexion and defined it, and then retired to make his calculations in order to reveal my destiny.

I awaited his return with some anxiety, for I really attached some importance to what his statement would be; for I had been told that he had great success in that sort of work and that his conclusion would be valuable to me. Directly he returned with a piece of paper in his hand, and his statement was short. It was to the effect that my head was of the tenth magnitude with phyloprogenitiveness morbidly developed; that the essential faculties of mentality were singularly deficient; that my contour antagonized all the established rules of phrenology, and that upon the whole I was better adapted to the quietude of rural life rather than to the habit of letters.

Then the boys clapped their hands and laughed lustily, but there was nothing of laughter in it for me. In fact, I took seriously what Rutherford had said and thought the fellow meant it all. He showed me a phrenological bust, with the faculties all located and labeled, representing a perfect human head, and mine did not look like that one. I had never dreamed that the size or shape of the head had anything to do with a boy's endowments or his ability to accomplish results, to say nothing of his quality and texture of brain matter.

I went to my shack rather dejected. I took a small hand-mirror and looked carefully at my head, ran my hands over it and realized that it did not resemble, in any sense, the bust that I had observed. The more I thought of the affair the worse I felt. If my head was defective there was no remedy, and what could I do? The next day I quietly went to the library and carefully looked at the heads of pictures of Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Napoleon, Alexander Stephens and various other great men. Their pictures were all there in histories.



Among them all there was but one that gave me any encouragement, and that was John C. Calhoun's. My head, so far as I could observe, looked somewhat like his. Then I read a great deal about him and concluded that if John C. Calhoun had made the great man who figured, as he did, in National affairs, there was some hope for me! But the mischief done me by that foolish incident gave me anxiety for some time to come.

As the days went by and the weeks passed I learned the art of studying. As the old Professor had told me, it came slowly but surely. It was not long, however, until I had mastered the principles of the diagram system of Clark's Grammar and, to my joy and comfort, I eliminated myself from that class of little girls and reached the dignity of one whose members were about my own age and size. And by dint of hard effort I learned to analyze problems in arithmetic by methods purely mental. More than that, I made proficiency in Comstock's Philosophy, and geography was nothing more than child's play to me.

In other words, my mind accustomed itself to sustained efforts at study, and as the first year closed I was reckoned among the successful students of the school. The young fellow who had humorously discouraged me by his assumed proficiency in phrenology became my fast friend and for one year we occupied the same dormitory and the same bed. Others of the more advanced classes accepted me on terms of chummy relation and I shared in their confidence and respect. It was the result of my determination to progress in my studies and my attainments in the substance of my text-books Really I became a familiar figure in all the walks of school life and took my place in the contests for honors along all lines.

The old Professor learned to set store by me and I was



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one of his confidential students. By and by he even permitted me to take charge of a class now and then and do some teaching as a tutor. I even acquired the habit of speaking in public and usually had some part in the debates and orations common to that school. Yes, the first scholastic year found me at its close a very successful student and well established in the institution.

I attended Church service twice a month at Picken's Chapel, an uncomely wooden structure in the chinkapin bushes two miles from the school. Occasionally I would venture further to a quarterly meeting and hear the Presiding Elder on Sunday.

It was my good fortune to form the acquaintance of a young minister who worked as junior preacher on the circuit. He was a student in Emory and Henry College, but his health had run down and he dropped out a year to recuperate and was sent to this work as assistant preacher. He was not through his junior year in college. I heard him at his first appointment at Picken's and I was greatly impressed with his ability. He was young, sparemade, with a severe face, a strong but not musical voice, with a distant sort of air apparently and wonderfully gifted in the use of words, especially words of more than three syllables. I regarded him as a prodigy.

At the close of the service I approached him and made his acquaintance and soon found him to be really a very kind and sociable young man. I did not open my heart to him, but he found out some way that I was looking toward the ministry and took more than a passing interest in me. While he was near my age he had had better advantages than myself and I looked up to him. This he recognized and appreciated.

As the year advanced and I became more and more intimate

with him I concluded to ask Professor Burkett to permit me to invite the young man to preach at the school chapel for the benefit of the student body. I knew that the old gentleman was very much prejudiced against most of the older Southern Methodist ministers, for he was a strong Republican in politics and a devoted Northern Methodist. Feeling ran pretty high between these two Church organizations at that time.

So one day I broached the matter and told him of this young man, and he made particular inquiry about him and became interested in him. Then I said to him: "Suppose we have him make us an appointment to preach some of these times in our chapel?"

The old gentleman said he would be delighted to have him. So the next time he came to Picken's I asked him to give us an appointment some week night at the school chapel, and he readily consented.

The appointment was made for the next Wednesday night. I took great pains to advertise it and we invited in the people living near us, and when the time came we had the house filled with students and other people.

The old Professor received the young man graciously. I felt some solicitude, for I had invited him and he was my preacher; and I wanted him to do well for several reasons. I remember his text as though it were but yesterday: "Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver"—one of the proverbs of Solomon. It was a well-prepared sermon, delivered with point and earnestness. The subject treated was the importance of clean speech and the advantage of acquiring the habit of using it in our young student life. The sermon made a profound impression. Before some of us retired that night we resorted to the dictionary to learn the meaning of

several rather extraordinary words he used in the progress of his discourse. That is, they were extraordinary to us. Beside that, however, he gave us many things to think about, and the sermon must have been beyond the ordinary, for I remember its outlines and substance to this day. It was a treat to hear him.

The young preacher spent the night with the Professor and until the next afternoon. I was busy with my errands at the odd hours and with my classes at the school hours and did not get to have any communication with him, but the old man conversed extensively with him.

After he had gone and just after the school had closed I went to the Professor's office. I wanted to find out what impression the young man had made on the old gentleman's mind and what his estimate of him was. I wanted to find out if I had sized him up right, or was I merely carried away with my infatuation for him.

The old gentleman was seated by his library table with a large and well-worn volume upon his knee. I said to him:

"Professor, how do you like our young preacher? Do you not think he is promising?"

The old man laid down the volume and took off his glasses and said:

"Well, sir; I am much pleased with him. He is a young man of very bright mind and fluent delivery. He speaks with ease and his information is varied and comprehensive for one of his years. You know he is not yet twenty, but he is more matured than many middle-aged men. And the most remarkable thing about him is his originality. I have just gone through with this volume which is "Five Hundred Sketches and Skeletons of Sermons" and there is not one word of that discourse he delivered last night in this book! I am sure, sir,

that you will hear from that young man some of these days."

The old man's words have long since come true, for that young man is Bishop James Atkins, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. I acquired an intimate fondness for him back there before we were twenty years of age and I have every reason to believe that he reciprocated it, and it matured into the most undying friendship and brotherly love.

Some years after that we both became members of the Holston Conference as co-pastors, and while I was pastor of the Church in Asheville, North Carolina, he was President of the Asheville Female College, back in the late eighties and early nineties, and we were like brothers after the flesh.

Then he became President of Emory and Henry College and I was transferred to Kansas City, Missouri, and for a time our paths did not cross. But later on, when he and myself were members of the same General Conference at Birmingham, Alabama, and the vote for Bishop was taken, he had seventy-six votes, and then dropped down to only one. After many ballots and no election seemed possible from among those leading in the vote, I took some part in bringing him back into the race, and I was gratified when he was elected to the great office of Bishop in the Church.

I expected good results from his work in this new relation and I have not been disappointed. I rejoice, therefore, that it was my good fortune to meet the young man in my early life out in the bushes of Picken's Chapel, in Bradley County, East Tennenessee, and there laid the foundation for a friendship that will be as lasting as eternity.

During the vacation, in my second year at school, I returned to my old home in Georgia to attend the Murray County campmeeting I had made up my mind that I would ask the Church to license me as a local preacher. My dear mother

received me with open arms and it was a joy to get back home once more. However, I had kept in regular touch with her through the mails. I knew everything transpiring at home and she knew every detail of my school experience. But to meet her again, face to face, was tinged with the breath of heaven. She went with me to old Center Valley Church and after the service a conference was called and my application for a recommendation from my society to the Quarterly Conference at the campground was made, and after remarks from the preacher and a number of the older members the application was unanimously granted.

That day marked another epoch in my life as a Christian. It was right there at that altar that I had made a public profession of religion and joined the Church, and those good people who had watched me for the five following years gave me their endorsement as a fit person for the ministry. Just what the Quarterly Conference would do awaited to be seen, but the people who knew me best had faith in me.

On Thursday of that same week the conference met at the campground. I was on hand. Rev. H. Adams was the Presiding Elder and Rev. H. H. Porter was the preacher in charge. The conference was composed of countrymen, honest and true. I stood my examination without trouble and retired. My case was considered quite awhile. It meant something serious for those men to license a young man to preach and turn him loose on the ministry. But one of them came out and invited me in and I returned with some fear and trembling. But my fears disappeared when Brother Adams announced that my license had been granted. I felt the responsibility sensibly enough, but was gratified that I was accounted worthy by that conference to preach the gospel as a local preacher.

The business was finished and the body adjourned, and directly I was left alone in the preachers' tent. I noticed the written ballots by which I had been licensed lying about on the floor, and my curiosity prompted me to examine them, and to my mortification I found three negative votes. This troubled me. I could not understand it, and it was three years before I did understand it.

After these years I preached in the town of Calhoun in an adjoining county and was invited home by a good brother. After dinner he said: "I owe you an apology. I was a member of the Quarterly Conference that licensed you to preach and I voted against you. I did it because you did not look to me like a man who would ever be able to preach much, and I gave the benefit of the doubt to the Church and put in a negative vote; and two others did the same thing. But I now think we made a mistake and I wanted to tell you so."

Then I understood why there were three negative votes against me. Not long ago I was out in one of the far Western counties dedicating a Church and a right old man told me the very same thing about his vote when I was licensed. I was gratified to learn that it was on account of my appearance and not because of any defect in my character.

When I returned to school and took up my work I was sent to an appointment some five miles from there to preach. I wanted to get out of reach of Professor Burkett and the students. It was at a typical country Church and a good congregation was present. About the time I got through the preliminaries the old Professor and several of the students walked in and took their seats. My text was, "If any man will come after me let him take up his cross and follow me". I preached about twelve minutes and sat down. The old Professor arose, took my text and preached a good sermon. He knew I would

fail and he was present to save the day and to preach to the people.

The following Sunday I had an appointment at Chatata, but resolved to make larger preparation this time. I went to the library and found a volume of sermons by Christmas Evans, the eccentric Welsh preacher. In looking through it I found his sermon on the text, "It is finished"; and, by the way, it is a remarkable sermon. I carried the volume to the woods and went over that sermon many times. Then I climbed upon a log and delivered it to see how it would sound. It was all right.

However, I seated myself and looked through the book generally and I found a sketch of his life prepared by his own hand. It was an autobiography. I read it with interest and I came across his experience at some great gathering in London when he was put up to preach. He was a man of force and power and he delivered a sermon of merit, taken bodily from a volume of sermons. He astounded the natives. There was such a clamor to hear the young Welshman again that he was appointed to fill another important hour. But he had no other sermon that he was willing to preach to those people and he packed his grip and made his escape from London instanter. I at once concluded that I had better let that fine sermon of Christmas Evans drop right there, which I proceeded to do; and that is the nearest I ever came to preaching the sermon of any other man.

When Sunday came I was promptly at the Church and entered the pulpit with less fear than on the previous occasion. I had already broken the ice and my dread was not quite so great. I took my text and plunged at once into its exposition, but in fifteen minutes I was at the end of my row. I could not think of another word to save my life, and I pronounced

the benediction and stepped from the pulpit. I felt badly enough, but Leroy Bates, a big-hearted old countryman who really wanted to encourage me, came around, put his big arm on my shoulder and in the greatest sincerity said: "Don't be discouraged, young brother, you may come out all right yet." That about finished me, and I declined to go home with him for dinner. Instead I struck the road as soon as possible and returned to my uninviting shack with the determination that I would let preaching alone until I had learned some sense.

CHAPTER X

The First Shock My Faith Ever Received

Up to this time, as I have already indicated, my faith was simple, confiding and unquestioning. It was the faith of my childhood. Yes, it was the faith of my mother. I did not know the meaning of doubt in my acceptance of Christ and in my belief in the Bible. It had never occurred to me that Christ was not the Son of God and that the Bible was not the exact Word of God. I had never thought how it was possible for Christ to be both God and man, or just how we had received the Bible. My innocent mind was an absolute stranger to quibbles on these matters. Christ was my Savior and I knew him as such from experience; and the Bible was God's truth to guide me through the trials and the duties of this life to a better life beyond the grave. These were accepted as undisputed facts. I had never dreamed that anybody called these truths into question.

But the innocency of my faith received a rude shock just about this time. Professor Burkett had a fine yoke of oxen and with these I did the hauling about the farm. One night they got out and wandered on the railway track and a passing train killed one of them. This broke up his team. He had a son who was a distinguished lawyer, living in Chattanooga, and he owned a fine farm in Meggs County, not far from



Decatur. On that farm he kept good stock. So he wrote to the old gentleman that if he would send over to Decatur he would be there at court and he would give him a horse. He gladly accepted the proffer and he gave me direction and sent me on the errand.

I reached Decatur that evening and made myself known to Colonel Burkett. He took me to the tavern to spend the night. Ten or twelve lawyers were attending court and they were stopping at the tavern also. It was a warm evening and after supper they were all sitting in the front yard talking. I was seated near them—an unsophisticated boy. It seems that just before that time, a month or so, a lawyer had left the bar and entered the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. His name was Wallace, and these lawyers were discussing his change from the bar to the pulpit. Some of them seemed to think that he acted wisely, because he was of a very serious turn of mind and too religious to make a successful lawyer. Others thought he had made a mistake and would regret it later on in life.

Then it was that Colonel Burkett assumed to speak. He was a man of strong intellect, well trained and widely read. He was not a religious man. The following is the substance of his deliverance:

"Wallace has not only made a mistake, but he has acted against common sense and reason. There is nothing in religion except tradition on the outside and emotion on the inside. The Bible is not a book to be believed. It is full of discrepancies and contradictions. The Old Testament is horrible. There are things in it that shock decency, to say nothing of a man's sense. The New Testament comes to us by a sort of accident. When King James appointed his commission to collate the manuscripts they threw out some of

them and one or two of the present gospels came very nearly being discarded. They were retained by a very narrow majority. A number of the epistles, ascribed to Paul's authorship, were never written by him and they are not entitled to belief. They are a jumble of incongruous writings brought down from an ignorant age, and they are not in keeping with the intelligence of the race. The age has outlived them; they belong to a period filled with ignorance and superstition. Christ, if he ever lived, was a good man, but misguided and died as the result of his fanaticism. Wallace has only written himself down a fool by giving up a good law practice to enter the ministry."

Another leading member of the bar challenged the statements of Colonel Burkett and took up each point, making vigorous reply to him. The argument grew heated and extended into the night.

But imagine the effect of all this on my innocent mind. It knocked me into smithereens. I had never dreamed of anything like that I had heard. It aroused all sorts of feelings and all sorts of questionings. It flung me headforemost out into a stormy sea without rudder or compass. The waves grew tumultuous about me. I was almost engulfed.

Of course I did not open my mouth and no one seemed to observe that I was sitting there. I arose and went to bed, but I did not go to sleep. I tossed from side to side filled with fear and misgivings. I thought of my mother and her faith; then it occurred to me that mother was just like myself. She had never seen anything of the world, had never read many books and was not an educated woman. She, maybe, was liable to mistakes. The man whom I had heard talk was an educated man; he had informed himself in history; he had traveled; he was a much smarter man than his father,

and maybe he knew things that the rest of us did not know. He saw nothing in the Bible to call forth his faith and a number of the others seemed to agree with him. He did not even accept Christ as his Savior. And yet I was starting out to prepare myself to preach this gospel and to hold up Christ to men and women. Is it possible that after all there is nothing in it? Can it be that the whole thing is a fable, as my learned friend had argued? And I put in practically the whole night with these disturbances and irritations running riot in my mind and heart. It was one of the most miserable nights I ever spent in my life.

When morning came I was restless and tired and my perturbation of mind was past description. I had but little appetite for breakfast. When I was through Colonel Burkett had the horse standing at the gate for me to take back. I mounted the one I rode, leading the other one and I started back home. All the way those same thoughts and fears had complete possession of me; I was drifting hither and thither, but could find no solid ground upon which to rest my faith and hope. The subtle poison of skepticism had been injected into my mind; it was finding its way into my blood, and the whole of me was becoming infected.

I reached home, attended to my duties and went to my dormitory. I told my friend, Rutherford, what I had heard and how it had disturbed me. He laughed at me and said he thought my eyes would get opened—that Colonel Burkett was right. He said he had a book he wanted me to read and handed me Thomas Paine's Age of Reason. Before retiring I glanced at the book and found some of the very things that I had heard the night before, but the book was so rank and offensive to me that it rather disgusted me than otherwise. I threw it down and tumbled into bed and from sheer

exhaustion fell to sleep. For some days I was rent and torn with conflicting doubts and fears. Life became almost unbearable. I could stand it no longer.

After awhile I went to Professor Burkett and threw open my heart to him. I told him what I had heard in the conversation among those lawyers, but did not tell him that his son was one of the leaders in that tirade against the Bible. I asked him if it were possible that what they said could be true. He began and opened up the whole subject, rehearsed to me the views of skeptics and infidels and then pointed out to me what effect such views had upon life and character. He took up Thomas Paine and pointed out his rank unbelief. Then he gave me an account of his life of debauchery and the awful death he died. He showed that Voltaire was a similar character and many others that he mentioned. He concluded that part of it by saying that such men led wicked lives, which the Bible and the Christ condemned and that, in a large sense, this was why they rose up in rebellion and became infidels. He explained to me how the Bible was inspired, how it had come down through all the ages and how it was believed by multiplied millions of the best people living and dead; how it had built up human civilization and developed institutions for the betterment of the race; that infidelity had done nothing constructively for man; it had only striven to undermine faith, to destroy, to blot out hope and to produce despair. Then his deliverance on Christ, and what he had done for the world, was elaborate and convincing. But he said that he had not the time to go over the whole field; that he had a little book that presented the matter in a nutshell, and he reached up and pulled down a small volume and handed it to me. He told me to read that and then he would give me something more extensive.

I went to my room and opened the book; it was Watts' Apology for the Bible. It took up every point made by the infidel and answered it succinctly. It gave me the exact history of the King James' translation of the Scriptures and threw a flood of light upon that subject. It gave me some relief, but the insidious virus of infidelity had gotten into my mental system and I still had doubts and fears. I was not inclined to give up my faith, or to go back on the Bible; I was simply fearful and filled with doubts. There was a condition of intellectual fermentation going on in my faculties and confusion and misgiving were the result. Difficulties of a mental kind were projecting their barriers in front of my pathway and I was unable to surmount them or to remove them. In whatever direction I would turn they were there to afflict me and to hinder me.

I was fighting a severe battle and victory was nowhere in sight. My faith remained intact, but it was clouded; my hope was still anchored, but the wild winds and the stormy waves were belaboring me. I was struggling to find a landing away from the fury of the storm; I was striving to quell the ebullition of my mental fermentation—yea, I was flinging my shoulders with might and main against the formidable obstructions that were blocking my progress.

I learned long afterward that I was only passing through that crisis of doubt that comes to the experience of every honest inquirer after the truth; yes, I had reached the point at which the innocence of faith had its severest trial—the time when the mind cries out after a more solid ground of hope than that accepted in childhood; a foundation that is not only built upon Christ, but that furnished a rational reason for the hope that is within the bosom.

I have since learned that faith comes to a point, in its

larger development and culture, when it wants to challenge the reason for its existence; when it desires to examine the integrity of its credentials and reach conclusions that cannot be shaken by every wind of doubt. But this fact I did not know at the time I was passing through the fires of purification. I could only know this fact after years of research and investigation. During the critical process of this period of doubt and fear the clouds were hanging low above me, and the adverse tempests were beating pitilessly upon me.

In the meantime I clung to my faith and followed in the glimmering light of my hope. With all my disturbance and oftimes anguish of spirit I tenaciously held on to the Bible and conscientiously gripped the hand of my Savior. I lost the innocence of my faith, but acquired a broader and a more rational trust; I saw the brilliancy of my childhood hope take on a faded hue, but I anchored my desire in the haven of rest and my expectation rose to sublimer heights as I emerged from the gloom and looked out upon the expanse of an unfolding future.

As the years passed by and my mind became more matured my reasoning faculties grew stronger, my intellectual horizon lifted its boundary circle and became more extended in its scope, and I found myself able to digest more nourishing meats and to cope with deeper and more perplexing problems.

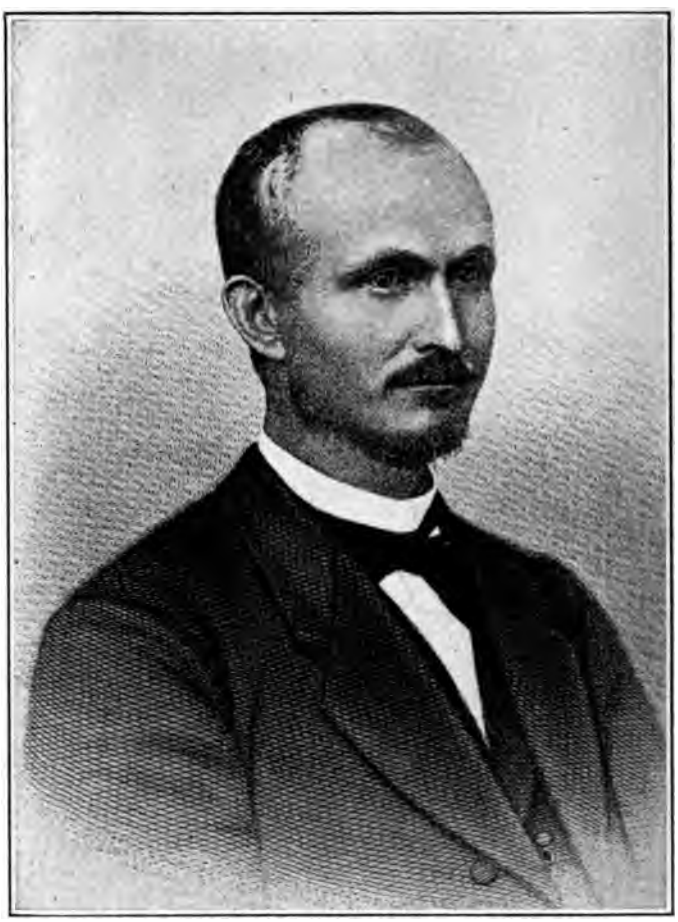
In other words, I ceased to be a child in my faith and became a full-grown man in my knowledge of God and his methods of revealing his will to humanity. But the result came to me at the end of a long struggle that tried the joints in my harness, and that gave me careful investigation into the elements that entered into the foundation of my faith and hope. Therefore it has been many a long day since troublesome doubts harassed and disturbed the state of my mind.



It was a fortunate coincidence that, along with those first struggles, I had a strong and steady hand to lead me and a wise and settled mind to help me solve the problems. In addition to this the thought of my mother's prayers for me and the influence of her godly tuition helped to strengthen and sustain me.

Now comes the sequel to this story, which will require me to skip over several years and give another incident closely related to it. I was pastor of a city Church, in which city the State University was located. By the student body I was elected to preach the annual sermon before the Young Men's Christian Association of the institution. They chose my subject for me—"The Inspiration and Authenticity of the Scriptures". I had three months in which to make the preparation and I devoted much time to reading and research on the question. In addition to this I drew heavily upon my resources already accumulated from the extended investigation along this line superinduced by my Decatur experience. When the time came to deliver it I had done my best. In fact, I have recently re-read that sermon and, after further years of study, I do not see where I could make any improvement upon it. Abler men could put up a much stronger discourse, but it was a finished sermon so far as my ability was concerned.

I had an immense audience, not only of students, but of local people and the faculty. I had liberty in its delivery, and such was the appreciation of it by the University authorities that they gave me the degree of Doctor of Divinity. This was unmerited and not deserved, but I was not responsible for their action. The sermon was published by request in the daily papers of the city and given a wide reading. I received many letters of appreciation from divers friends, and one of them was from Colonel Burkett. He did not know me. The



REV. W. E. MUNSEY, D. D.



fact is when I went on that errand to Decatur he did not ask me my name and when I left him the next morning he had no idea who I was. But I knew him. I will repeat a few of the passages in that letter:

"I have read with interest your sermon on the 'Divine Inspiration and Authenticity of the Scriptures', as published in the daily press, and I write this apprecition of it for two reasons. In the first place, I have gotten profit out of it. It has given me light on the subject. I have read a great deal on that question and have my peculiar views about it, but your treatment of it has inclined me to re-examine my premises and arguments and see if my conclusions are altogether sound. I was brought up under religious tuition and my predilections favor the Bible story; but my reason, in my more matured manhood, rebelled against its validity. This has been my position for years. But I must confess I get no pleasure out of my doubts and infidelity. I really want to believe the Bible and to have faith in a Savior. As far as my observations go the Christian man is the happiest and the most useful of all men. My heart wants to be a Christian, but my head will not give its consent. But I am determined to make further inquiry into this matter.

"In the second place, a friend of mine who knows you tells me that you are a former student of my father, and this fact quickens my interest in you and in the sermon. As I re-read it I felt that it was my father preaching through you. He has long since been gone, but I revere his memory and appreciate his work. Since he was instrumental in helping to produce you I am proud of you for his sake. My father was not a faultless man, but he had a generous heart and a confiding faith, and his work survives him in the poor boys whom he helped to get an education. He lived to a good purpose and

spent his long life in helping others. His sacrifices were many, but were he living his reward would be ample in the thought that he had aided others to make the world better."

When I read that letter it occurred to me that Colonel Burkett had unwittingly made that sermon possible. Had I not sat there as an innocent youth on that September evening in the long ago and heard his attacks upon the Bible and his doubts concerning Christ, I perhaps would never have gone into so full an investigation of that subject and preached that discourse. The experience cost me an anguish that words can never express, but out of it have come some of the most valuable lessons of my ministry. It has caused me to have more sympathy with that class of men who seem to want to know the truth, but whose perverseness leads them to either doubt and discard it or to treat it with indifference and let it go by default. My observation is that men get no comfort out of their skepticism and infidelity; that down in their hearts, in their better moments, they want to accept the truth and be Christians.

To return to my school experience. I never did wilfully disobey Professor Burkett's rules but once. Fortunately for me I covered up my tracks so skillfully that to the day of his death he never found it out. My friend Rutherford was about finishing up his career at Student's Home. He had been there more than the time required to graduate in the course of study. He taught awhile. During the time he fell desperately in love with Maggie Castillo, a beautiful young lady pupil. She was of medium height, had a face of rare attraction, sparkling blue eyes and her head was covered with a wealth of black curly hair. She was the sort of a girl with whom an ardent young fellow could not help falling in love. There was a winsomeness about her personality that was hard

to resist. She was as bright as a star of the first magnitude. In her studies, in her recitations, in her compositions and in her popularity she excelled.

Her room was adjoining the Professor's residence and she had a congenial companion. I was the only boy in that school who had access to the premises. The others were barred. My duties, as well as the confidence the old gentleman had in me, gave me that privilege. Rutherford laid his case before me and told me that I was the only man on the hill who could come to his relief. He was almost desperate. I yielded on the principle that all things are fair in love or war. I was convinced that those two young people were absolutely necessary to the completeness of their lives. So I became the confidential go-between for those two youngsters; but in doing it I took my own student life into my hands.

After I launched into it I often trembled at the risk, for it was the hardest thing imaginable to carry on an episode of that sort in the school without the old man finding it out. So many a time, away late at night; yes, often in the early morning when the ground was frozen, I took off my shoes and stealthily threaded my way through the shrubbery and the rose-bushes to Maggie's window and gently tapped on the frame. She was the most easily waked of any one I have ever known. She never failed to respond. The window would quietly go up an inch or so and, either in or out, would drop one of those sweet little epistles so full of meaning. The next day in the classroom, right under the old Professor's nose, I could see those two lovesick people, through their eyes, carrying on a courtship that communicated the thoughts of each to the other. I knew what was in those clandestine letters. I could read their telepathic communications just as accurately as though I could hear their articulate speech. It used to interest me no

little, and the amusing as well as the fortunate thing was the old gentleman, who thought nothing escaped him, was in blissful ignorance of what was transpiring under his eyes.

Finally things came to a head. The plan was arranged for their elopement and marriage. I arranged every detail, secured the minister, fixed the place in a distant neighbor's home, kidnapped Maggie, turned her over to Rutherford and then dropped as completely out of the scheme as though I were no part of it.

After she had been gone an hour by some means the Professor got on to it. I have always suspected that it was through some one who missed her late at night from the room. He arose, sounded his bugle and that was the signal for everybody to assemble in the chapel. He would sometimes do this at the most unexpected hours of the night or day. He lighted up the room and we were soon dressed and before him. He was all excitement and unfolded what had happended. Rutherford and Maggie Castillo were gone and he was in a towering rage. He wanted an honest confession, for he was determined to know who had aided them. Some one had a hand in it and he wanted to know the guilty party or parties. Everybody looked amazed. No one knew what to answer, except that they knew nothing of it and were surprised to hear the news. The fact is I was the only human being, except Bob and Maggie, that knew one living thing about it; and I was about the only one whom Professor Burkett failed to suspect. It never once occurred to him that I had any connection with it. He organized a committee and started out to find the young couple; he was confident that they had gone to some neighbor's house.

I was one of the trusted ones selected and, at my suggestion, we started in exactly the opposite direction they had taken.

I knew where they had gone, but I did not intend that he should find them that night. I knew that in less than an hour they would be safely married, and then the old gentleman's wrath would be impotent, so far as they were concerned.

After arousing a number of the neighbors, to their surprise and disgust, we finally returned from a fool's errand and retired for the rest of the night, which was not much of that night. The next day the Professor learned all about where they went, and at what time they were married and the preacher who performed the ceremony. He was mad for days, but with all his ability to ferret out violations of his rules and bring the guilty parties to justice he never succeeded in getting one iota of information about who planned that elopement and delivered that girl to that lovesick young tutor. That was one secret that baffled all his detective skill.

Well, while I did deceive the old gentleman and to some extent abused his confidence, yet I have never had any compunction of conscience about it; for I have never thought I did wrong in breaking down the barriers erected by him to keep Bob Rutherford and Maggie Castillo from the consummation of their wedded bliss. They loved each other deeply and they were entitled to its fruition.

CHAPTER XI

My Last Year With Professor Burkett

Even before the second year at Student's Home had been finished I had gone to work and built me a dormitory of my own, selecting a spot for it in a weird ravine amid a thicket of pines and far away from the noise and distractions of the other dormitories. I wanted solitude, for I had serious work to do during the few hours each day and night I had to devote to it. It was a crude hut, built of peeled pine poles, chinked and daubed with a stick and mud chimney and roof made of clapboards. The shutter to the door was hung on the outside because there was not room enough on the inside, with my scant furniture, for it to open and close. My bed was swung from the rafters, which gave me some more accommodation. It was a comfortable shack, but unsightly and unattractive. The one beauty of it was, I did not have to pay any rent. It was mine. In this inclosure I did some of the best work of my life.

At this particular time I was in my last year at that school. The coming months were to be busy. In addition to my regular work about the farm to keep up with my expenses I had the books in the advanced class to master. I certainly feasted on no idle bread as those months came and passed by. It was the severest year of my life. It put a tax upon all my

powers of endurance. My fare was of the simplest kind and it had to be prepared by my own hand. It was not nourishing and I gradually ran down in health. The strain was too exacting and symptoms of decline began to manifest themselves. I steadily lost in weight and in appetite. My eyes took on a hollow look and my face turned pale. I was reduced until I only tipped the scale at one hundred and sixteen pounds. The day I entered that school my weight was one hundred and forty-nine. I became somewhat discouraged and began to doubt my ability to keep up the struggle to the end. I was within two and a half months of the close, but I could hardly put one foot before the other. Yet I did not relax my efforts at study and my attempt to keep up my duties about the place. The old Professor expostulated with me, but I was too close to the end to stop. I must finish at all hazards.

I had about reached the limit of my strength and was forced to accept the old gentleman's proposition to stop my work about the house and the farm and take board with him for the last two months. This somewhat relieved the tension and I renewed my diligence in my studies. I successfully mastered the course of study and was right at the head of my class. They elected me valedictorian, an honor that every aspiring student appreciates. I also won a majority of the medals offered for proficiency and was ready for the graduation day.

Three long years had passed away. They had been years of toil, hardship, self-denial and deprivation. With a pen of iron they had engraved the stages of their progress upon my mind and heart, and their fearful strain was manifest in my sallow cheeks and stooped form. Through all the long years since then I have never ceased to look back to those as the three eventful years in my life. They had presented obstacles to me of a formidable character. At times they looked like Alpine

heights, rugged and forbidding; but I had managed to climb them and at last stood on the summit and saw the sunlit plains beyond. Through tears, sweat and heartaches I had passed the crisis, but the experience had well-nigh cost my health and left no phase of my character untested.

During the time I enjoyed no delicacy of diet, no elegance of attire, no circle of association beyond my student acquaintance. My table had been scant, my clothing coarse and uncouth. A large part of my association had been with my books, my chores, the four walls of my shack and the forest that moaned in solitude about my rude habitation. But the experience had developed my resources, extinguished the unsubstantial ardor of my dreams and aircastles, taught me the hard lessons of economy and burned into my consciousness the fact that the only success worth the having bases itself alone upon the imperishable merit of moral and intellectual worth.

True, these lessons had come to me through the medium of many humiliating failures, repeated disappointments under the merciless pressure of want and ambition; but they were worth the price I paid for them. I had learned from actual experience how to hope in despair, feel brave in times of fear, compass success in the jaws of defeat, go forward in the face of frowning obstructions and rise triumphant out of the apparent wreck of failure and expiring hope.

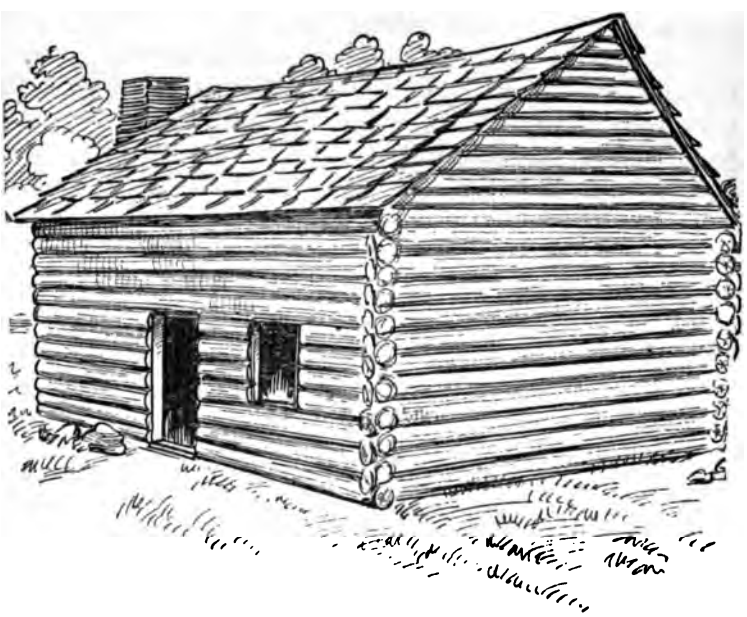
My mind had gradually yielded to the wholesome tuition of systematic training, my aspiration had been kindled into the blaze of an inextinguishable yearning for the best and noblest in life, and the whole current of my being had been swept by these potent forces into the channel of a deeper and wider stream of unfolding possibilities. My feelings, my desires, my thoughts and my ambition had undergone a change. The

future was transfigured before me with the radiant light and glory of a new world. I had put away childish things and had become a full-grown man.

So that important day, known in school parlance as Commencement Day, was on hand and I was ready for its consummation. How many emotions rush from the silent chambers of subconsciousness as memory carries one back to that eventful day! It makes me feel now like the dews of youth were once again upon my brow and the friends of far-off years were again before me. This was a proud day for me. The sun was bright and the earth looked as gladsome to me as on its natal day when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. Springtime, like a vernal queen enamored of sweet perfumes, was attired in her costume of opening buds, half-grown leaves and variegated flowers.

From the country round about and from the town not far away a large concourse of people had assembled to witness the closing exercises of the school. Young men and beautiful maidens, happy boys and laughing lassies, were full of the spirit of the occasion. Cheerful words were reverberating through the throng and smiles and good humor lighted up every face in the audience. Whose is the heart that could not catch the inspiration of such an occasion! Speech after speech was delivered and each one met with well-merited applause.

At the close of the program came my time for the valedictory. I walked upon the stage with my homespun suit put in the best condition possible. After the first few moments the excitement left me and I became unconscious of self and my surroundings. My speech absorbed my whole thought and I spoke with deliberation. As I reviewed with delicate propriety my varied experiences at Student's Home, my long and



My Shack at Student's Home.

pleasant relations with my classmates in study, their kindness toward me in my unaided effort to succeed, the constant care and oversight of our venerable teacher, a forecast of my purpose and aim in the future, and finally pronouncing, in pathetic tenderness, the word "Farewell", the audience responded most generously with demonstrations of applause. Most of them knew what it had cost me to win the honor of that glad day.

Dear old Professor Burkett, kind-hearted and impulsive, wept aloud as old Leroy Bates, the man who tried to comfort me at Chatata that Sunday, climbed upon the stage and put his big arms around me and said: "I know'd it was in you and believed it would come out if you had half a chance. God bless you, my boy."

Looking back at that day's performance from the present time, the effort did not amount to much and there was really but little, if anything, in the speech; but taking into account how little I knew when I entered that school, how I had struggled to overcome difficulties and having the sympathy of the student body and most of the audience with me, all combined to make it appear most favorably in my behalf.

But that demonstration of good-will did not turn my head, for it had been won at too great a sacrifice, and I realized that the goal of my ambition was far in the future. My work had only begun. I had just advanced far enough to understand the magnitude of the unfinished task. Instead of puffing me up, it tended to humble me; and after remaining long enough to receive the congratulations of my school friends and to say good-bye to many of them, I bowed myself out and hastened to my dormitory in the thicket to pack my belongings preparatory to my departure. My work there was done. The little hut felt dear to me.

I never was a man of much surplus sentiment, still I felt attached to the shack. Many lonely nights I had spent within its walls, and from its rude altars I had sent up many earnest prayers through its clapboard roof to the throne of the Father. No profane word had ever desecrated its hearthstone and no base deed had ever polluted its archives. It had witnessed my secret tears; it had heard my vows of faith; it had recorded my poverty and want; it had registered my failures and my successes, and it had reverberated with my songs in the night-watches.

True, it had sheltered destitution, privation, actual want; but it had been poverty without disgrace, privation without whining, and complaint and want without degradation. It had given hospitality to the purest of motives, the noblest of ambitions and the loftiest purposes and aspirations. I felt some pain as I stepped from the dingy doorway and closed its familiar old shutter forever. It had been my silent friend in the days of my sorest needs. Away from its dismal haunts I carried a permanent sense of many bitter experiences, but these were intermingled here and there with the delightful fragrance of many pleasant reminiscences. I doffed my hat and gave it an affectionate though an endless good-bye.

I wended my way back to the Professor's office and made my final settlement with him. He had kept his books and I had kept mine. They looked like veritable mosaics. Several pages were filled with the result. Two hours work here, five there, a week yonder and a month over there, and so on and so on to the end of the chapter. His contained a pound of bacon, a quart of sorghum, a peck of meal, a few potatoes, a little coffee now and then, and so on *ad infinitum*.

We both had observed the monthly totals and it did not require a great deal of time to foot up the results. I had

gotten everything from him—books, tuition, provisions and a part of the time shack rent. I had paid for these in hourly and daily labor; and when the settlement was complete I owed him fifteen dollars. But I would not have owed him that amount had it not been that my health gave way and I had to board with him two months. It is a fact that during all that time I had not paid him a single penny in the coin of the realm. I executed my note to him for that balance still due, and I was ready for the road.

My severest trial came when I bade Professor Burkett and his good wife a final adieu. She was one of the best friends I had at Student's Home. She had never spoken a cross or an unkind word to me during my three years' stay in school. She had been like a mother to me and I made myself almost a son to her. The relation between us was tender and sacred. She had helped me out many a time with a little butter, a loaf of bread, a few eggs, a cup of milk or some other delicacy equally as welcome.

She took me by the hand and said: "My boy, I am sorry to see you leave us. You have been a good and hard-working boy. I have never seen anything wrong in your conduct. You have taken a great deal off of Mr. Burkett. He has often been cross and spoken harshly to you. But you have quietly submitted and been obedient. You have been good to me, and I love you almost like a son. I have no fear of your future. Some boys leave here at the end of their term and I never expect anything of them. But you are not one of that kind. I am now old and afflicted and have not much longer to stay here. Some of these days you will come back to revisit the old scenes, but I will not be here to greet you. I will be sleeping up yonder on the hill. But when you come go up there and see the mound over me and remember that I

loved you and wished you well."

That talk got close to me. It brought tears to my eyes. She was so sincere and so true in her nature. As I told her good-bye I realized that it was the last time I would ever see her. And so it was. I brushed the tears from my eyes, cleared my throat, recovered my self-control and turned to the old Professor. He grasped my hand and, in a tender voice for him, said:

"Rankin, I can endorse nearly everything my good wife has said to you. True, you have had a hard time here, and once in awhile I have been severe on you. But it was for your good. I could have made it easier for you, but it would not have been for the best. Luxuries never develop the strength of a man, and smooth seas are not the training schools for sturdy sailors. Privation, hardship and the stress of personal responsibility are the tests of character. The man whose will-power and determination enable him to master self and to triumph over difficulties is the man who has an open sea before him. Such a man never fails to make the landing, despite the storm and the tempest. I could have helped you more and made your burden lighter, but that is not my idea in the training of a boy.

"Now you are through with me, but your real work is only begun. You have laid the foundation and you are prepared to become the architect of your own fortune. You now have a proper idea of the task ahead of you. You have been, in the main, faithful and conscientious under my tuition, and if you practice the same principles in the future you ought to be able to make a man out of yourself. In after life I trust that you will often revert to your experience at Student's Home and think well of me. I have done the best I could for you. God bless you; good-bye."

With mingled feelings of sadness and joy I flung my old grip across my shoulder and pulled out up the lane and over the hills toward home.

When I reached the crest from which I first had that man to point out Student's Home to me that late September evening, nearly three years before, I halted and looked back over the scene. It was early in the afternoon and all nature was rejoicing in the new-born spring. The house and the farm were in full view. I could even see the pensive pine thicket where my little old shack was snugly ensconced. What a change had come over the spirit of my dream since the time I first stood there and looked over the autumn panorama! I had made tracks on every inch of that little farm. I had either stuck a plow or a hoe or a spade in almost every foot of it. I had rebuilt many of its fences; I had worked its successive crops, grubbed up its sprouts, cut its wheat and oats, planted apple trees and peach trees, had cultivated the flowers and shrubbery in its yard. Yes, I was as well acquainted with the whole of it as I was with my own spirit.

In turn for all that I had mastered the training necessary to enable me to develop and cultivate whatever there was of good in my being, and the thought gave me a measure of satisfaction. But had I known when I stood there the few years before all that I had found out in the meantime, would I have had the courage to undertake it? I doubt it very seriously. It is fortunate for us that the future holds its own secrets and steadily refuses to divulge them to us until we are prepared for them. This is a wise provision of Providence. Memory holds for us in sacred trust the records of the past and hope holds out the inducements of the future, and thus it is that we live one day, one hour, one moment only at a time. Therefore we are inspired to press forward

toward the dawn of the unborn years with desire and expectation for the best they keep in store for us. Otherwise we would give up the struggle in despair and drop by the wayside. As it is, under this Providential arrangement we live day by day and strive to make the most of our opportunity. I am so glad that the future keeps its secrets.

I awoke from these hillcrest reveries, mopped the gathering perspiration from my brow and again quickened by footsteps. Since then nearly forty-five years have swept by, but the picture then sketched upon the canvas of my memory, instinct with life and splendid in the charm and beauty of its delicate colorings, is hanging before me to-day untarnished by the mildew of time and undimmed by the alternations of the sunshine and shadow of those passing years.

Toward nightfall I called at an old-fashioned farmhouse and spent the night with friends who lived near where I tried to preach my first sermon. It was a comfortable home and I was accorded a warm welcome. The gentleman and his wife had expressed an abiding interest in me two years before, and it was delightful to be their guest. The family worship that evening was tender and full of spiritual unction. There is no hospitality like that of the old country home of other days. It has nearly disappeared, but then it was one of the glories of our humanity. The doors were thrown wide open, the best that the farm afforded was upon the table, the royal old feather beds and the sincere good-will of the household; it made life worth living to spend a night in that sort of a home. What a night of rest to my tired body and depleted energy! It was the essence of luxury. No anxious thought, no harassing fear, no impending lessons, no scant table, no dingy hut, no bugle to arouse me from slumber at four in the morning! It was like a dream of the better world. It was rest.

Then the welcome home. Was it not glorious? I had only been there once in those long busy three years. To look into mother's face, to see the tears of gladness course down her withered cheeks, to behold her smile and to hear her voice was like getting back to the promised land. We talked away into the night, and the next morning I was ready to go to the field. But no, my pallid face and my thin form and wasted strength, in mother's esteem, needed some days of surcease from toil. I had to take life easy for awhile. That was her order and I obeyed. But the thought of being at home once more, with loved ones about me, was almost too good to be true.



CHAPTER XII

A Country School and My First Conference

Rest from labor for a season is a sound policy. It gives the tired body and exhausted nerves not only an opportunity to unbend, but also to regain their resilience with new vigor and elasticity. No human spirit, however blithesome and alert, can mantain its strength and power of exertion under the pressure of incessant strain in one direction. Variety is the spice of life in all active pursuits, as well as in social recreation and diversions. It rehabilitates the system, exhilarates the mind and spirit and it restores the fagging energies. It introduces into the tenor of routine duties an element of relish and it scatters along the dreary pathway of monotony the warmth and radiance of sunshine. Neither absolute rest nor persistent and unremitting toil is the best for the human organism.

The best type of rest is found in a change from one department of activity to another. It is this that brings profitable relaxation to the tired body and the overtaxed mind. Life is real and earnest, and there is no provision made for elegant leisure within the sphere of an aspiring spirit. Persistent effort along some department is one of the fundamental conditions of development and progress. It is a principle demonstrated in the history of mankind that if the stream of life is allowed to stand still, even for a limited time, it will stagnate

and produce mental disease and moral weakness; but if permitted to flow on in some well-selected channel it will increase in capacity and strength and retain its freshness and purity even to the period of old age and feebleness. Under such conditions life reaches its highest altitudes and invests its energies and efforts to the best and noblest advantage.

Therefore after the intervening of a few weeks I was not content to remain inactive at home. It did not require very long for my physical condition to take a rebound, and I was ready for some active employment. The growing crop did not need me, so I started out to find some order of employment. I went into a remote section of the county and applied for and obtained a country school. It was a five months' public school. It was in a community where school teaching had been the bane of the ordinary teacher's existence. It was in a very good community of farming people, where there were quite a large number of grown-up young people. They were not only backward in matters of education, but they were strangers to home discipline and control. They had been permitted to have their own way, and they were hostile toward school government and restraints. As an invariable result teachers had a hard row of stumps in that school district. Many of the parents gave them no co-operation, but took the part of their refractory children. I was apprised of this state of things when I accepted the school, and the local board put me on notice that I was chosen with a view of not only teaching that school, but of controlling it; they were tired of the failures that had been made by my predecessors. I faithfully promised them that if they would stand by me there would be discipline in that school and that its rules would be enforced to the letter. They gave their pledge.

The first morning that school opened there were about sixty



present, and I proceeded to organize the work and to classify the students. It took pretty much all day. Then I laid down a few simple rules and put them on notice that I was there to do them all the good possible and to aid them in getting a reasonable knowledge of the books to be studied; that I would expect every boy and girl to do his or her duty, not only in preparing the lessons, but in aiding me to control the school; for there could be no school without obedience and discipline. I wanted to love all of them and I wanted them to love me, but I was the teacher and had to be respected accordingly.

After a few weeks I soon detected the few larger boys and girls who were not in school for study, but for mischief; and, as I was a young fellow, they would make a rough house for me whenever they saw proper. I sniffed trouble in the atmosphere of that school and determined to meet it firmly and without wavering. There were two who were the leaders—a large boy and a large girl. They were neighborhood sweethearts. The boy was named Morgan, and he was a strapping big country bully; the girl was named Missouri, and she was about seventeen, haughty and disrespectful. I bore with them patiently and good humoredly and tried all my powers of moral suasion.

Instead of this accomplishing the desired result it seemed to impress them with the belief that I was afraid of them and was doing my best to avoid trouble. I concluded at once to disabuse their innocent minds. So that morning, on the way to school, I provided myself with two or three good hickories and put them in a conspicuous place near where I sat. I hoped that the sight of them would have some restraining effect and supersede the necessity of their use. As the youngsters filed in they eyed those new pieces of extra furniture with a good

deal of curiosity and I saw Morgan wink at Missouri. It was not long until her willfulness manifested itself. I called her up before me and my tone of voice and manner indicated to her that I meant business.

I said to her: "You are too large to whip; you are nearly a grown young woman. But you seem determined not to keep the rules of this school. Now you take this note and go home and give it to your father and mother. It will tell them exactly the state of your case. If they do not keep you at home, but send you back here, then you will either obey me or you will take the consequences. I am going to run this school if I have to thrash every boy and girl in it."

She rather demurred, but I would take no protest or promise from her. The next morning she returned and brought a note from her father telling me to make her behave and that she had been put under me for that purpose.

For a week she and Morgan were reasonably civil, but evidently they held a council of war and agreed to break the truce. One afternoon, just before the hour for closing and without any apparent provocation, she got into one of her tantrums and threw the whole school into confusion. I gathered up one of those well-seasoned switches, gave her the left hand of fellowship and the way I made the dust fly from her thin shirtwaist was a sight to behold. When I had finished the job she was in tears and moans. Morgan at once arose and said he would see me just as soon as school closed. I picked up a bench leg and as I made at him I remarked that he would not be put to the trouble of seeing me when school closed; that I would see him on the spot. He made tracks from the house before I got a single blow at him. Then I reduced the confusion to order, for it was general by this time. The larger pupils looked amazed and the smaller ones were



My Method of Reducing a Country School to Discipline.

frightened out of their wits. I told them that school would promptly open the next morning and that I was prepared to hold the fort against all comers.

The news spread that night throughout the whole community and the next morning the members of my board called on me to know the cause of the difficulty. I laid the facts before them and they not only authorized the expulsion of Morgan and Missouri, but voted me a resolution of thanks for my timely effort to run that school. My fame as a school-teacher spread for miles and my name was on nearly everybody's lips. They had never known anything just like it, and I awoke to find myself a hero. I had no semblance of trouble in that school again. My discipline was tiptop and the order fine. The County Superintendent, who was an able Cumberland Presbyterian minister, congratulated me at the close of the term on my success and offered me nearly anything he had in the county.

I delighted in the school the rest of the term. I had some bright boys and girls, and to see them develop was an inspiration. One boy particularly appealed to me. He was about fifteen years old, but rather small for his age. He was as bright as a dollar. I used to go home with him to spend the night and would give him extra help in his work. Along toward the close of the school I said to him one day: "Bob, school will soon close and I do not want you to stop your studies. You are gifted and will make a scholar some day. Your father is able to send you off to school and give you a chance, and I am going to talk to him about it before I leave the neighborhood. What do you think about it?"

He looked at me seriously and replied: "Professor, I do not want to go to school any more. I have learned enough to attend to business, and I am not going to make a scholar; I

want to make money. I can read and write and figure very well, and to be a money-maker I don't need any more schooling."

Well, that settled it. Whenever a boy of that age makes up his mind and fixes the standard of his ambition, it is my experience and observation that you had just as well let him alone. And it is also true that no boy rises higher than the ideal he places before him. So Bob had all the learning he wanted, and no more school for him.

Years went by; I had been to college and was a member of the conference, and stationed in a city Church. To my surprise I found Bob one of my members. He had accomplished his undertaking; he had made money and was worth about one hundred thousand dollars; but that told the tale. He was not worth anything else to himself or anybody else. He had buried his talent, all his talent except money-making, and that had grown into a sort of morbid disease. He never amounted to much in the race of life. He passed away many years ago and his name is now practically forgotten. His ideal was low and groveling and his ambition and life never rose above it.

While teaching that school I boarded with Uncle Sam Connally. He was a fine old country gentleman, not educated, but sensible and a good citizen. His wife was equally as fine an old lady. They became attached to me and I to them. They both called me by my given name. When the war began they had five boys and every one of them was killed in battle. Not one came back to comfort the old people. One of them left a young widow and two pretty little girls, and they all lived with Uncle Sam. The little girls were six and eight years of age. They went to school to me. The young widow was beautiful and attractive, but she was four or five years older than

myself. At this juncture there occurred an embarrassing though somewhat amusing incident.

One Sunday morning in early October there was no Church service in the community and Uncle Sam invited me to take a walk with him down the creek to his other farm. He had a good one where he was living, and the second one was two miles below. It was not long until we had passed through the gate on his lower farm, and we walked extensively over it. It was a fine body of land and the brown corn and the opening cotton looked inviting. Uncle Sam was a good farmer, though he was getting along in years.

After awhile we were tired and climbed upon the fence to take a rest. We were sitting there talking and directly the blunt old man turned to me and said: "George, I am gettin' old and so is the old 'oman. I've wore myself out farmin' and I'll soon have to quit. I've got these two good farms and have nobody to leave 'em to but Molly and the two children. They can't manage 'em. Now why can't you and Molly come to an understandin'? It would be a good thing for her and the children and it would be a good thing for you, too. Not every poor young man has a prospect like that."

I pulled on my studying cap, for I wanted to be particular about my answer. I appreciated the young widow as a friend, but had never thought of anything else, and I liked her two little girls. I did not want to hurt Uncle Sam, and yet I was not prepared to accept his generous proposition. Marrying at that time was far from my thoughts. There had been nothing in my conduct toward the young widow, or in her conduct toward me, to justify Uncle Sam in trying to close out a deal of that sort between us. It was a cold-blooded business proposition pure and simple that he had made to me. I had to be adroit and diplomatic in my reply. I had to save his friend-



ship for me and I had to save myself from the situation he was about to thrust upon me.

So I opened my mouth slowly and deliberately and spoke thusly: "Uncle Sam, I had not thought seriously about an arrangement of that kind; I have been so busy with my school. I see two possible barriers to that plan. In the first place, I am not through with my education. I have about three, possibly four, years ahead of me yet to devote to education. It would hardly be the proper thing to enter into such an understanding until I finish going to school. Then, in the next place, I have an idea how such a proposition as that would strike Miss Molly. I do not believe that she would take to it at all. Hence it would be better to go slow in any plans of that sort. Women are sometimes peculiar, and if she should find out that you and myself were negotiating a contract of that kind, and not even consulting her about it, I am sure that she would resent it; and then you and myself would be in a very embarrassing attitude toward her."

Uncle Sam was rather guileless, and he looked at the matter from such a practical standpoint that he was urgent, and he assured me that he was confident it would be all right with Molly. He suggested that I take the proposition under advisement and to think of it seriously. It was a fine opportunity for me, and it would solve his and his good wife's problems. In this way I disposed of the matter, and it is my impression that the young widow never heard of Uncle Sam's effort to bring about an understanding between her and me; for in the course of the next year she married a widower, and that permanently settled my part of it without my having to incur any responsibility.

During the fall I aided our old circuit preacher in two or three meetings, and he was very much impressed with my

promise. He was the same man who had taken up my application for license to preach. His name was Rev. H. H. Porter. He was a local preacher, but spent much of his life serving as a supply. He was not a man of any special education. He had very good practical sense, had read a number of substantial books and he was a good hortatory preacher. In revivals he was excellent. But he was illiterate and not a safe counselor for a young minister. He did not appreciate the need of an education in the ministry. He took my fluency for gifts and my ability to express myself for education. He conceived the idea that I was wonderfully endowed and that there were but few preachers among the younger men in the conference anything like my equal. He even went so far as to tell me that I had all the "larnin' I needed"; that sinners were rushing pell-mell into the bad place and that I ought to drop everything and "jump in and try to head 'em off".

Strange to say, he just about convinced me that what he said was true. I thought the matter over prayerfully and when the Presiding Elder came to the adjoining charge I dropped down there and had a talk with him. I told him what Brother Porter was advising me to do. He had me to preach that night and the next day told me that the conference was in need of some vigorous young men; that there was a place for me, and that if I concluded to make the application to have Brother Porter make the arrangements and it could be attended to at his Quarterly Conference, which would be in a couple of weeks.

I reiterated the conversation to Brother Porter and he was much pleased. The plan was completed to have me ask the Quarterly Conference to recommend me to the approaching session of the North Georgia Conference for admission on trial. I agreed to it with decided misgiving. It broke into all

my plans for completing my education and I feared the conference would not take me with only a high-school training. I almost backed out as the time approached to make the application, but Brother Porter was very persistent, and there was no doubt in his mind whatever on the subject.

When the Quarterly Conference convened my application was in order and duly presented. I stood the examination without difficulty and retired, but I really hoped that the members of that body would vote down the application. When I was called in, however, Brother Adams announced to me that my application had been favorably acted upon and that he would hand me two or three books to read prior to going to the conference. That settled it. I was going down to the North Georgia Conference as an applicant for admission on trial into the traveling ministry.

In the meantime I settled up my school affairs, mailed a money-order to Professor Burkett to cancel that due bill left in his hands, bought me a brand-new conference suit, the finest one I had ever put on and had some cash left in my pocket. I preached somewhere every Sunday, read the books given to me by the elder and was ready for conference. Mother was elated. It was the proudest time of her life. The idea of having a son in the ministry was the consummation of her wish, the fruition of all her hopes.

The time came and I was off for Athens to attend the conference. I had never been anywhere much, and had seen nothing beyond my little narrow horizon. So far as society and the delicate proprieties of polite company were concerned I was totally lacking in such accomplishments. I was a raw country youth, with the habits and manners of rural life, only three years of training in a plain, unpretentious school and

rather awkward and uncouth. I had none of the polish of cultivated and really refined gentlemen and ladies.

We stopped over a few hours in Atlanta. That was the largest place I had ever seen and I was wonderfully impressed with it. We reached Athens late that afternoon. A great many preachers had boarded the train and joined us. When we reached the Church, a very imposing one to me, Dr. E. W. Speer, the local pastor, was there to assign us to our homes. I was read out to Ferdinand Phinesy. It was some distance to his home, but when I reached it my eyes were dazzled. It was the finest home in Athens, situated in ample grounds, for he was the richest man in that section of the State. He had a number of ministers as his guests, but outside of Dr. A. T. Mann, a very distinguished preacher, the rest of us were members of the rural route delivery class. We were good and true, but we did not know much and we had never been accustomed to quarters and style like we found in that palace. I was always a close observer and rather cautious in my movements when not certain of my ground, so I noticed those who were at ease in the home and, by and by, caught on to the ways of the household.

Mr. Phinesy was an elegant gentleman of the old school. He had old ideas of Church work and service. He was a great admirer of Bishop Pierce and accepted his views of things. He was opposed to organs in the Church, and had no patience with paid choirs and solos. Hence he had moved his attendance from the big Church, where these things were in vogue, and placed it in a small mission Church not far from his residence. His family, however, attended uptown. He had a number of his old ex-slaves living in their old well-built and whitewashed houses. They were the aged, the maimed, the halt and the blind; and he supported them. He

took the older guests around to see them and had prayers with them. He was a very kind man. His wife was a much younger woman than himself, highly cultivated and the perfection of refinement. She was as gracious and considerate of me as if I had been a man of some prominence instead of being young and inexperienced. I sat next to her at the table and she often addressed her remarks to me. I have often thought of what a tactful hostess she was. Her son and daughter were models. It was one of the finest homes of wealth that it has ever been my good fortune to enter and abide within. It was but a day or two until I felt as much at ease amid its splendors and gorgeousness as though I had always been accustomed to it.

I took a green young preacher friend with me to dinner one day and his boorishness greatly embarrassed me. He knew nothing of the ways of polite society. Later on he and myself were telling a circle of less favored young men in their entertainment of the elegance and wealth of the home where I was stopping and one of them said: "Yes, I have gotten on to that. My host told us about Phinesy and his peculiarities. He said that in selecting his guests to entertain at this conference he asked the committee on entertainment to send him Dr. Mann, and then to fill up his house with the odds and ends of the conference not wanted by any other family; and I understand that he has a wonderful aggregation under his roof. He did not select me and I am glad of it."

That was a stunner, and the more I thought of the company he entertained the more I was convinced that there was more of truth than humor in the statement. But I enjoyed that home and learned more of the ways and manners of polite society while I remained with them than I had ever learned in the previous experience of my life.

Now for my conference examination for admission on trial. I do not remember but one of the committeemen, Rev. W. R. Foote. He did most of the examining. He was a highly educated man, cold and distant, deliberate and accurate; and he took us through a rigid process. I remember several of my classmates. Among them were Rev. T. R. Pierce, a graduate of Emory College, nephew of Bishop Pierce, afterwards a prominent member of the North Texas Conference and my predecessor on the tripod of the Texas Christian Advocate; W. P. Lovejoy, also a graduate of Emory College and the oldest member of the class, and long a leading Presiding Elder in his conference; W. W. Wordsworth, a graduate of Randolph-Macon College, who took high rank in the conference, but dropped out a few years ago; J. D. Hammond, a graduate of the University of the State and afterward long the Secretary of our General Board of Education; and last but not least D. L. Anderson, a graduate of Emory, who died a short time ago at the head of our great Chinese University. These are some of the men whom I met in that class and there were others. I looked at them, thought of their fine equipment for work, revolved in my mind the fine advantages they had enjoyed, and then I thought of my meager preparation.

It was not long until, in my own eyes, I shriveled up into the smallest specimen of a preacher who had ever knocked at the door of that conference for admission. I became disgusted with myself and wondered why I had permitted ignorant but dear good old Brother Porter to persuade me to take such a step. I ought to have followed the dictation of my own conscience and judgment and gone on to school until I was ready, in some measure, for such a step; but instead of that I had thrown my own plans to the wind, and there I



was in the midst of that trained company unfit and illy prepared for such grave responsibilities. I could but wish that the conference would decline to accept me and tell me to go back to school. But if they did take me I would travel one year, ask to be discontinued and then pursue my original plan.

During the session of the conference I was all eyes and ears. I saw and heard everything that transpired and everybody that figured in the proceedings. It was all a revelation to me, and I learned everything of which I was capable. I heard some distinguished men preach. I did not miss a solitary sermon. I heard the renowned Dr. Jesse Boring. His text was the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. He was then quite old and feeble, but the sermon was a masterpiece.

I heard Dr. A. A. Lipscomb, the celebrated Protestant Methodist preacher, and at that time President of the State University. I heard Dr. J. B. McFerrin, one of the most remarkable men in Methodism. On Sunday morning I heard Bishop W. M. Wightman, a preacher of rare scholarship, of rich attainments, of charming eloquence, deep thought and royal diction. He completely captivated me, and next to Bishop Pierce I put him down as one of the greatest preachers I had ever heard. It was my fortune to hear him many times in the succeeding years, but I never found it necessary to revise my judgment of his ability as a preacher. He was superlatively great.

I was received into the conference on trial. A few nights later I sat in that auditorium for the first time and listened to nearly two hundred preachers receive their appointments. It was a sublime spectacle. I have heard it hundreds of times since then, and it is still my candid judgment that there is no scene like it anywhere on the face of the earth. It challenges the admiration of the world in its demonstration of the

principle that consecrated men of education, the equals of any class under the sun, have so yielded themselves to the work of the Church that they are willing to surrender their right to choose their fields of labor and at the single command of one man appointed to select their fields for them they sit and cheerfully listen to the command to go, and, like trained soldiers, march off to the field of conquest without a murmur or a complaint.

Such a thing is not possible under any other Church government in the world. What an impression that sight made upon my plastic mind! It was simply sublime. I have witnessed that same scene a hundred times since that night, and in no instance has it failed to elicit my supreme admiration.

I became so interested that I actually forgot all about myself and about the fact that I was to become a part of that moving battalion. When the fact did dawn upon me I did not feel the slightest concern about the place where I was to go. All I wanted was a place to work and its location and condition mattered no more to me than if I had been a carrier-pigeon waiting to have the message attached to its feet.

Toward the close of the list the Dalton District was called and toward the last Tilton and Resaca Mission was announced and my name read out in connection with it. A song was sung, the benediction pronounced and the next morning we began to scatter to the four winds of the conference.



CHAPTER XIII

My First Experience as a Circuit Walker

Resaca is a famous town. It occupies a large place in history. Yet it is only a village on the Western and Atlantic Railway, fifteen miles below Dalton, and located at the point where the road crosses the Ostenaula River. It has never had over three or four hundred people living in it. But its fame lies in the fact that there Sherman, in his march to the sea, had one of his bloody battles with General Joseph E. Johnston. Several hundred men fell there and were buried in crimson graves. The hills around the place are still marked with reminders of war. At the time about which I am writing these reminders were fresh and gruesome. The trees were splintered with shells and pierced with minie-balls. A Confederate cemetery near by tells where the boys in gray are sleeping who fell in that local conflict.

Tilton was only a few miles above Resaca, and these were the two prominent points in my work. But it extended across to another valley through which the old Selma, Rome and Dalton Railway ran. Up and down these two valleys and across blackjack hills intervening was my mission. There was not a finished churchhouse on the work. There were three frames that were weatherboarded and seated, but otherwise incomplete and they were old. The reason that the

ravages of war had thus left them was that they served the purpose of army hospitals. One of them, called Union Church, not far from Resaca, was the scene of the bloodiest part of the battle, and it looked like it had been struck by a thousand minie-balls. It was literally peppered with holes and the dark splotches still covered the floor, indicating the points where many a poor fellow lay while his life blood ebbed away. There were several large trees around it almost gnawed down by the ravenous teeth of canister and shell. So my first work was rich in history though poor in almost everything else.

I went directly from Athens to my work, and I was ready for service the first Sunday after conference. I preached in Resaca. I had no horse and, except when I borrowed one, which was occasionally, I walked from one appointment to another. I was not a circuit rider, but a circuit walker. I secured board in the good home of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Barnett, members of my Resaca society. I was there semi-occasionally, and they declined to receive a cent from me. It was well, for I had the fewest number of cents to invest in board at any time during the year.

I spent the most of my time out on my work among the people. They were mostly poor and had but few accommodations, but they were hospitable, generous and kind. Not many of them had recovered from the effects of the war. They did the best they could for me, but their best was not much.

One of my appointments was called Cove City. Just why the word "city" was attached to it I was never able to understand. The cove was there in all its glory, but it was as innocent of anything akin to a city as one can imagine. The railroad passed the place and it was a sort of a flag station,

but there was no town or village. The church was on the hill and it was a log building. The logs were hewed and spliced and the building was long and not very wide. It had two doors, one in the end and the other in the side, though the side one was nailed tight. It had very rough and uncomfortable seats, a big jam in one end for a fireplace and big cracks between the logs of the structure. In the other side there was an old-fashioned bee-gum pulpit, a sort of a box arrangement. The top of it was nearly to my neck. It had one open end and that was where you entered it, and on the inside was a rude bench for the benefit of the preacher. In the back of the pulpit in the wall there was an open window with no shutter of any character. The people entered the house from the end.

My first appointment at that place was late in November and it was a raw, chilly day. There was no fire in the wide-open old fireplace. The blast was coming through the cracks in the walls uncomfortably. But a large congregation came out, not simply to the service, but to size up the sort of a preacher the conference had sent them. It was a trying time for me, for my effort was to be a sort of a trial sermon. At least it was an initial sermon, and the good I was to do depended very much upon the impression I made in the beginning. They had never seen me before or heard tell of me until I was assigned to the charge. But they were just as new to me as I was to them, so they did not have much advantage of me in that respect.

I was on hand early and seated in the pulpit. From the opening in the end of the pulpit I could see the people as they entered and they could see me. I sat there and watched them as they passed in, and they cast their eyes at me. Among

them I noted an old woman. She was tall, angular, loosely constructed in form, with grizzled thick hair piled about her head, an old wrinkled face with a weather-beaten expression; and she was clad in a faded green calico dress, and the remnant of a lady's straw hat was in her hand. As soon as I beheld her I recognized in her a personality all to herself. I felt confident that if she had never been born the world would have been minus her presence.

When she stepped upon the doorsill she dropped her old steel-gray eyes upon me and for a moment looked me through. She tossed her head slightly, walked by the pulpit and took her seat in the north corner of the room where she could lean back against the wall. I went through the preliminaries and took my text and began operation. It was a text which I have since found out that I did not understand, but it afforded me a basis for extended remarks. I used it a little like a cowboy uses a stob to which he fastens his lariat when he wants his pony to graze. It gives him latitude. So I fastened on to that text and grazed about it from all points of the compass. What I lacked in my knowledge of it I more than made up in the length of time I worked at it. Of course the exercise soon warmed me up and I was unconscious of the cold wind pouring through those capacious openings.

Then it was that my old woman friend reminded me of my surroundings. Right in the midst of my climax she deliberately picked up her old hat from the bench beside her, rose to her feet and started toward the door. She looked like the tallest woman I had ever seen. As she reached a point right in front of the pulpit she checked up, looked at me and gave her head a significant shake and said: "Now, lookie here, my young man, ef you're a goin' to give it to us in that thar style I'll be switched ef I ain't got 'nuff of you jest right now".

And she disappeared through the door and passed down the hill. I was not only dumbfounded; I was pertified.

What she meant and who she was I had not the remotest idea. Neither could I imagine what I had done to call forth such a rebuke. My, but I felt spotted! I thought it possible that I had ruined everything the first pass out of the box. One thing certain, I was at the end of that discourse, and I hastily announced a hymn and pronounced the benediction. There was nothing else to be done under the circumstances. Thus my first service at that point ended disastrously.

At the close a one-armed local preacher rushed round and grasped my hand and introduced himself to me as Brother Hickman, and said to me: "Do not pay no attention to that old woman. She's Aunt Rachel Stone. She's half cracked, and nobody don't notice what she says and does. We all know her. She's a good old woman. You go to see her tomorrow and it'll be all right." That helped me up considerably. Most of the older people came around and spoke to me, and a number of them invited me home with them.

Among those who came forward was a bright-looking little black-eyed girl, with her hair like jet, with an intelligent face and graceful movement; and I knew she did not belong to that neighborhood. She looked to be about seventeen years old and I found out afterward that she was a governess in the home of the leading family in that community, but her home was in Dalton. Now, gentle reader, keep your eye on that girl, for there will be more of her further on in these chapters. She made an impression on me.

The next morning I made it convenient to hunt up the home of Aunt Rachel Stone. She was one woman with whom I was anxious to make fair weather. I wanted her to be on my side ever afterward. It was not long until I found her



"Ef that's the style you are goin' to give us I've got a nuff of you right now!"

house. It was a homely structure, small and unprepossessing. I knocked on the door and directly she appeared, threw the door open, had a pair of large octagonal brass-rimmed specks resting above her eyes upon her wrinkled forehead.

As soon as she saw me she laughed and said: "Why, it's our young preacher! I'm shore glad to see you. I heard ye yisterday; but, chile, I was too much froze to listen to sich preachin' as that. Come right long in; I want to talk with ye." The welcome thus accorded me put me on good terms with her and for an hour I sat by her cozy fire and talked

I soon found that she was not nearly so half cracked as Brother Hickman had given me to understand. The fact is, she was naturally one of the brightest women in her class I ever met. She was uncouth and uncultivated, and absolutely ignorant of the proprieties of life; but she had dead loads of good horse sense, and the most original genius of all my acquaintance. I never tired of hearing her talk when once I succeeded in winding her up and getting her started. She could say some of the wittiest things and get them off in the most unique way of any woman whom I have ever known. And she had the kindest heart and could fix some of the most palatable things to eat.

I have often thought that if Charles Dickens or Thackeray could have gotten hold of Aunt Rachel Stone the world today would be under obligation to them for a book the rarest in the history of the literature of novels. There was a wealth of bright ideas in her old mind. They were rough and unpolished just like herself, but they were glittering even in their unpolished brightness. She had the oddest way of taking off people whom she wished to caricature and she could characterize them in the most unheard-of expletives that ever fell on mortal ears.

She was a clean housekeeper; she was a good farmer and plowed and hoed and gathered her own crops. She had plenty of everything about her in the way of homemade substantials. That visit made her my fast friend and it mattered not afterward whether it was cold or hot or whether I preached short or long Aunt Rachel never again broke the end off of one of my sermons.

There was an old man, a Hardshell Baptist preacher, who lived across the mountain three or four miles from Cove City in a basin known as the "Bearpen", whose name was Jack Davis, and he was a good companion piece for Aunt Rachel. He came over one Sunday and preached at the Cove City Church and he made an attack on the Methodists. Among other things he said: "The Methodists remind me, ah, of a old nigger whose moster's old goose died, ah He tole old Zeak to take'er out, ah, behine the crib and bury'er, ah. The next mornin' the ole moster was out thar, ah, and seed the ole goose a layin' thar with some dirt sprinkled on 'er head, ah. He went back and jumped on Zeak, ah, and axed him why he did not bury that thar goose, ah? Zeak said, ah, that he had sprinkled some dirt, ah, on 'er head, and that accordin' to Methodist baptism that was bein' buried, ah."

That was as far as Aunt Rachel proposed to let him proceed and she arose, shook her fist at him and shouted: "Old Jack Davis! Yo ole heart is as rotten as one of them old frostbit pumpkins down yonder in Armstead Leak's bottoms!" And she gave him a wide berth. But that was her way of doing. When things at Church did not go to suit her she rose and spoke right out in meeting, it made no difference who was doing the preaching.

I had another appointment far down the valley at a Church known as Sugar Valley Church. It was an old framed hull.

At one of my appointments I announced that at the next Sunday appointment at that place we would baptize infants, and that I wanted all the children in the neighborhood that had not been baptized to be brought out and we would have them dedicated in baptism. I was unordained, but I arranged with Rev. T. J. Simmons, a local preacher living near Tilton, to go down with me, preach the sermon and baptize the infants.

I have never seen such a crowd of urchins from three months old up to seven years. When Brother Simmons called the parents with the children around the altar it brought nearly the bulk of the congregation.

I carried the water around for him and he baptized them by the score. Toward the close a young mother who had a beautiful little baby girl presented her to the preacher. He took the child in his arms and said: "Name this child." She thought a moment and replied: "I'll let Brother Rankin name her." It took me so completely by surprise that every girl name that I could remember at once went out of my mind. The suspense became painful, but I recalled the name of a young lady who lived in the community and in my confusion I said we will name her "Miss Bodie".

The congregation broke into a fit of laughter, for the young lady was present and I had been seen in her company occasionally. As soon as silence ensued Brother Simmons baptized the child in that name. It completely took the breath out of me, and I did not hear the last of it in that community while I remained on that mission.

Three years ago I was in Bell County, Texas, in a local option campaign and addressed a large massmeeting in Temple one Sunday afternoon. At the close of the meeting a gentleman came around and asked me if I had ever preached in

Sugar Valley, Georgia. I answered him in the affirmative. He asked me if I recalled the time when Brother Simmons baptized all those children one Sunday morning and that at the request of one of the mothers I named one of the children "Miss Bodie". I told him that I remembered the incident very vividly though it had been about forty years ago.

"Well," he said, "Miss Bodie is my wife and we are living out here just about a mile." That was the first and the last time I ever named a baby girl for its mother at the time of its baptism.

I had many appointments on that charge. I preached in the old buildings regularly, in the schoolhouses, in the private homes, and in the summer under brush arbors and now and then in the groves. I had many good revivals. I lived a great deal in the humble homes of the people. I either spent a night or took a meal with every white family within the bounds of the work and repeated the experience in many of the homes.

I was surely a traveling preacher during the whole of that year. It is useless, therefore, to say that I was popular with them. Any preacher who visits his people, lives among them, sleeps in their beds, eats at their tables and prays around their firesides will be popular with them. They will love him and stand by him whether he is much preacher or not. There has not been a year since I have been with the Advocate that I have not met one or more of the people whom I knew on that hillside Georgia Mission.

I did not take up the course of study that year prescribed by the conference. The reason was that I had already made up my mind and did it before I left the Athens Conference that at the end of the year I would ask a discontinuance and return to school. There was a good school taught in Resaca

by a graduate of the State University, and I made arrangement with him to recite at odd times my Latin and Greek, and one or two other studies, so as not to fall too far behind; and in this way I made some progress in my school studies.

It was a busy year from start to finish, and in the main it was a happy year. Those people were so good and kind to me. Many of them would have been willing almost to pluck out their eyes for me. And among them I found many of the truest and most exalted types of Christian experience and character that I have ever known. It is a fact that among unsophisticated and uneducated people it is often true that their religion is more spiritual and Christ-like than among those who mix the world with their Church membership.

Rev. W. J. Scott, D. D., was my Presiding Elder. He was a large, fleshy man and his home was in Atlanta, but he spent the most of his time on the district. He was a man of fine literary attainment. He was a scholar, a reader, a profound thinker and at times he was sublimely eloquent in his sermons. Take him one discourse after another, he was one of the most delightful preachers I have ever heard. But he was grouchy and often disagreeable. He could get more enjoyment out of being waited on than any man I ever met. Whenever he would come to my Quarterly Conferences I had to give up my time to looking after his wants. He took a great fancy to me and seemed to be fond of me, for I left nothing undone to make his visits pleasant to him.

I had a funny experience with him once. He wanted to make a round of three weeks away back in the mountain section of his district, through Pickens, Fannin and Gilmer Counties. He arranged with Brother Simmons to fill my appointments and appointed me to take charge of him on that round. It was not a pleasant task. The best thing about

it was that I would get to hear him preach a great many times. He was afraid of a horse and had mortal dread of a dog. So I had to get an old, broken-down, bony horse to pull the buggy. He would not ride behind any other sort. This to me was a positive affliction. I never did love to drive that kind of an animal. But he was Elder and he never knew but that I was delighted. We traveled most every day, except Sundays, and he preached every night along the route.

At one appointment, far out in the mountains, he preached one of his finest sermons, and right in the midst of an eloquent climax a hard-looking old mountaineer sprang to his feet and in a stentorian voice shouted: "Wolf sign! Wolf sign!" It nearly frightened the sense out of me and it threw Dr. Scott completely off the line of his sermon. It spoiled the service. We spent the rest of the night with a splendid family, and they told us that the old man was a very religious man, but a typical old mountain wolf hunter, and what he meant by "wolf sign" was that there was game close at hand. That was the way he expressed himself when the services reached a point at which the tide of religion began to rise. It was his way of shouting.

But this is not the most amusing incident. We drove up a long hill one afternoon and just before we started down the next one, as was his custom, Dr. Scott had me stop the horse and he got out and walked down. He was afraid that the harness might break and, as he was so large, he might get hurt. He had done this so often that I was getting tired of it. So I let the old horse strike a trot and left him some distance behind. He had on a tall silk hat and a tremendous sack coat and his trousers were rather short. A quarter of a mile ahead of him the road bent around a sort of an elbow and I saw a bench-legged fice sitting there. I knew that



Dr. W. F. Scott, My Presiding Elder, and a Bench-Leg Fice.

when Dr. Scott came near with his big hat and stepping high the dog would tackle him. Just as I turned the bend out of sight I whipped the old horse up a trifle. After awhile I heard the Elder shouting at the top of his voice: "Oh, George! Begone! Oh, George! Begone!" Directly I looked back and saw him coming backward with the dog following him up and barking, and he was punching at him with that silk hat and shouting for me. Finally the dog desisted and the Elder came up puffing almost out of breath and declared that he had never seen such a vicious brute in his life and that he expected to be lacerated beyond recognition by the animal.

I got him back into the buggy and kept him there the rest of the trip. If at any time he asked me to let him out I always suggested that a dog might be down the hill and that settled it at once. On that trip he held a conference in Jasper, an old mountain town. There I met Rev. Fred Allen of the Texas Conference. He was on a visit to his sister's family. He talked Texas to me until I made up my mind that if the favorable time ever arrived I would come to Texas and spend the rest of my ministry.

That trip was a great advantage to me. I not only met a great many very excellent people, but better still, it gave me the benefit of the company of that great man for three consecutive weeks. I heard him preach a series of great sermons and it broadened my conception of the gospel ministry. I engaged him in almost constant conversation on various subjects, and it was like sitting at the fountain of wisdom and deep experience. I felt like I had been through a school of literature and theology. It has always been a treat to me to get in the company of great men. They have taught me much as a preacher.



When I returned I took up the thread of my work and pushed things vigorously through the rest of the summer. About that time a brilliant Baptist minister came within the bounds of my work and located in the Sugar Valley neighborhood. He conducted a great revival for them at that point and I attended some of his services. He was a fine looking man and as sharp as a steel trap. I soon regarded him as a marvelous preacher. His elocution was superb, his voice perfectly modulated, his sermons well prepared and his delivery was well-nigh faultness. He was all the rage in that community.

I was so impressed with him that I arranged for him to aid me in two of my meetings. He did so and his preaching was most acceptable. I had never heard a man who could equal him in reading a hymn. His prayers were soul-stirring. His appeals to the unconverted were almost irresistible. He was so infinitely beyond anything of which I was capable that I felt it was almost a burlesque for me to try to preach when he was present. There was not a thing offensive in his sermons to other denominations, and that was something remarkable in those times and on my charge; for a Baptist minister then was usually noted for his public abuse of the Methodists. But not one unbrotherly word fell from his lips. He was in deed and in truth a genuine evangelist in his style of ministry.

He remained rather quietly in that neighborhood for two months, except to preach occasionally, after those meetings closed. Nobody could find out anything about him, where he came from or what was his business among those quiet people. He declined to discuss himself, his family or his object in locating in Sugar Valley. He excited a great deal of curiosity and inquiry; for those people, as backward as the most of

them were, realized that he was capable of filling a much more inviting sphere. He did not look like any of them, and he dressed far beyond the style and custom of his neighbors. However, his conduct was proper and his manner of life unobjectionable. He was an enigma. As he was a Baptist preacher I did not give myself any concern about these matters. He was cordial to me and his wife was an elegant lady. They simply did not fit into the place they were then occupying ,and that was the only trouble about them.

One day in the early fall he borrowed an excellent horse and buggy, ostensibly to make a little trip into Tennessee to attend to some business and drove off. He had won the confidence of the community and the loan was made to him without a misgiving. He went alone, leaving his wife in the house they had rented as a home, and was to be back inside of a week. That was the last ever heard of him. To this good day his tracks have never been discovered. I was taught by that incident that all is not gold that glitters.

At the close of the year my last Quarterly Conference was held at Cove City. The stewards made their final settlement with me and the different sums footed up sixty-three dollars. That was the cash receipts for the year; that is, for my part of the "quarterage". But my board had cost nothing, neither my laundry nor mending. The good women had done this for me gladly; and I had a grip full of socks, two or three pairs of yarn gloves and several old-fashioned comforters knit and given to me by the girls. And I had experienced a great time holding meetings, filling my regular appointments and visiting among their homes I was satisfied with the pay. It was the best they could do, and I presume that it was very good pay for the sort of preaching they had received.

I drove Dr. Scott into Dalton where he was to take the

train the next morning for Atlanta, where he lived and where the Annual Conference was to convene the Wednesday following. At Dalton in the presence of Rev. George G. Smith, now one of the aged members of the North Georgia Conference and a valued correspondent of the Texas Christian Advocate, I told Dr. Scott to take my reports and present them to the conference and ask for my discontinuance; that I had made up my mind to go back to school and finish my education.

It surprised him very much and he pooh-poohed the idea. He said the conference needed young men like myself and that I had made a fine start; that it was his purpose to send me to the Ringgold Circuit the next year; that it would pay me two hundred and fifty or three hundred dollars. I expressed my appreciation to him for his kind offer, but told him that my purpose was fixed, my plans were all made and that it was of no use to discuss the matter further. Brother Smith told me that I was exactly right, that he was surprised to hear Dr. Scott trying to dissuade me from so laudable a determination. "Go on to school," he said, "and both you and the Church will be the gainer."

I never met Dr. Scott but once after that. Several years had passed and I had been invited by the board of First Church in Atlanta to go down from Chattanooga, where I was stationed, to preach for them one Sunday in the absence of Dr. H. Clay Morrison, their pastor. Dr. Scott was one of my auditors, an old and broken man on the retired list. He gave me very close attention and then came forward after the benediction, took my hand cordially and said:

"Well, George, I am so glad to have heard you and to meet you again. I have kept up with you and felt a keen interest in your progress. I guess you did right when you had me to ask for your discontinuance as a probationer in our

conference so that you could go back to school. I opposed it at the time, but you pursued the right course."

He has long ago gone up to the conference on high, but I have always rejoiced in the fact that I spent that year under his administration as my Presiding Elder. He was a great help to me and a real inspiration to become a minister of whom the Church would never be ashamed. He unconsciously became one of my models, and some of the lessons he imparted to me abide with me still.



CHAPTER XIV

A Year of Special Preparation for College

I remained at Resaca and entered the school being taught by a university graduate. Twelve men of the town, who had means and ambition for their children, had put up one hundred dollars apiece and paid him a twelve-hundred-dollar salary to teach. They opened the doors of the school to all who wanted to attend. They collected tuition from a few who were able to pay and let the others go free of charge. It was a good school.

Professor Hodge was a scholar. He had taken a university course and he was young and ambitious. He knew how to inspire students to study. He was a good disciplinarian, but ruled more through kindness than otherwise. He took special pains with me and gave me a good start in Greek and Latin and Mathematics. I had already had the advantage of partial training under him the previous year while I was traveling that mission.

I took up permanent board in the good home of my old Barnett friends. They would not take a cent of money from me, but at my earnest solicitation they did let me take charge of their barn, their woodpile and other little jobs about the house and premises. They treated me like a son. Mr. Barnett was a man of royal nature and genial disposition. Mrs. Barnett was a German woman of the best type. She did not wince it in her brogue or manner, for she had been born and

brought up in this country; but she did show it in her sturdy disposition, her kindness of heart, her thriftiness of habit and her incessant industry. Her husband always called her by the pet name of "Dutchman", and she seemed to appreciate it. I put in the whole year under their roof, and better people I have never known. They have both long ago passed over to a rich reward beyond.

My first open fight with the saloon began that year. It was at Acworth some miles below. I attended a great temperance rally and was one of the principal speakers. The first time I ever saw my name in the public prints, in any extensive way, was the written account of that meeting in the Atlanta Constitution. The account of my part of it was not the most complimentary, but I was recognized as a factor in the fight. And from that time till the present my warfare upon the saloon has never ceased. I had seen so much of its deviltry even then and since then I have seen its woes, its sorrows, its ruin, its crime, its bloodshed, written in letters of horrible history all along the pathway of my observation. No one man has made the saloon pay a heavier toll for its diabolism than myself. I have seen hundreds of them bite the dust and go out of business.

While at this excellent school another domestic shadow, dark and oppressive, fell upon my heart and across my pathway. My only brother, who in the meantime had entered school and made wonderful proficiency, was also in this school. He was stricken with illness and died. He was eighteen years of age, tall, handsome and intellectual. Had he lived he would have made his mark at the bar. Early in the morning I was seated by his bed where I had been all the long night through. He had been unconscious; I had longed for a moment of returning consciousness. I wanted one more word

from his manly lips. Just as day was breaking across the eastern horizon he opened his eyes and looked up brightly into my face. I asked how it was with him and he responded clearly: "All right. I am not afraid to go. You complete your education and devote your life to the ministry, and though absent in body I will always take an interest in you." He closed his eyes, gasped a few times and all was over. Ah! a thousand times have I thought of him as the years of toil and burden and conflict have gone by me.

Along in November of that fall, knowing that I was going to try to enter college the next autumn, I concluded to run up to Chattanooga, where the Holston Conference was in session, and meet Dr. E. E. Wiley, President of Emory and Henry College, and talk the matter over with him and have all the arrangements made in advance. I wanted to graduate in that old institution. It was the greatest college in Southern Methodism at that time, and it was in the old conference where I was born and brought up and the one I had determined to enter when through the high school.

It was the second conference I ever attended. I knew a few of its preachers. They had been in my grandmother's and my father's home. Of course they did not remember me, but a boy never forgets anything. Bishop Doggett was presiding. He was the third Bishop I ever saw. I observed him closely. A Bishop was the biggest human on earth in my estimation in those days. They were more than human. I still have a great reverence for them, but I have helped to make so many of them since then that I do not regard them with the same awe-inspiring reverence that I did in my young and impressible year.

I know them to be great men, entrusted with great responsibility, but after all I have learned that they are simply men

like the rest of us; and I find them usually to be brotherly and approachable just like other consecrated Methodist ministers. But back in those days I would not have gone into the presence of one of them with any sort of familiarity of address any more than I would an angel. I only stood or sat at a distance and looked at them in wonder and astonishment. When they said anything I heeded it as though an oracle had spoken. It was yea and amen. To hear one of them preach was the occasion of a lifetime.

Bishop Pierce had wonderfully enrapt me. Bishop Wightman, though unlike Bishop Pierce in appearance and style of eloquence, had enhanced my idea of the sanctity of a Bishop. And there sat Bishop Doggett, presiding over the Holston Conference, the equal of the other two in reputation and saintliness. He was tall, slender and stately; a venerable face, a marvelous voice and an eye peculiarly luminous. He was the embodiment of the best qualities of the old Virginia gentleman; imposing, grand, majestic, and every inch a Bishop, whether in the chair, in the social circle, on the platform or in the pulpit. He never seemed to unbend his dignity or appear in any way like a common man. His utterances were measured and his diction lofty at all times and on all occasions.

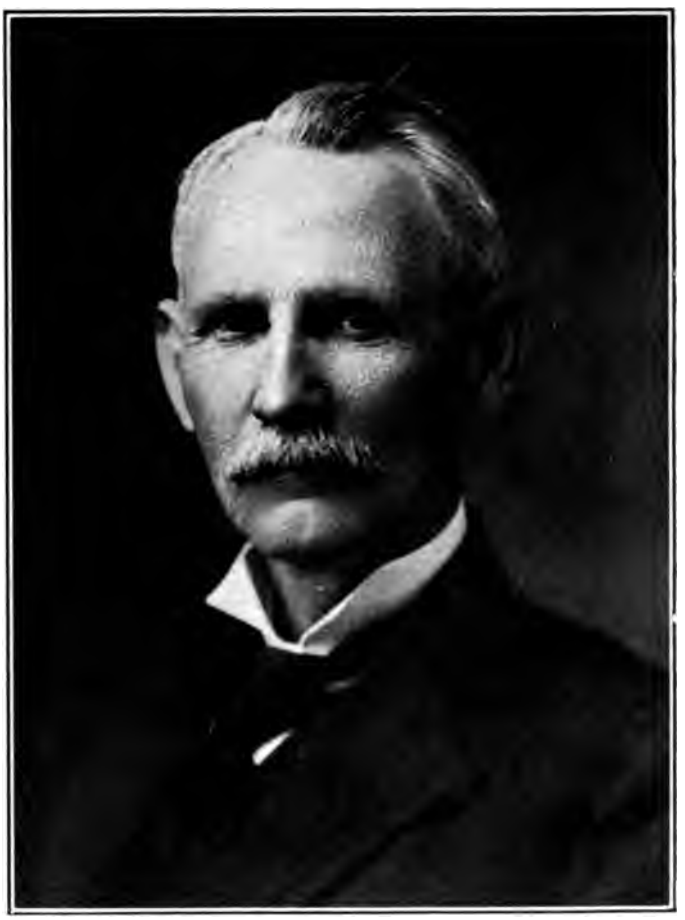
When I gazed upon him that morning as he presided over the deliberations of that body my reverence for him was akin to that of a superhuman being. I would have known he was a Bishop anywhere upon the face of the earth. Yet it was several years before he found out that there was such a man in the world as myself. And even then I stood at a respectful distance from him in feeling and manner. So did most everybody else. He was Bishop Doggett, and yet it was just as natural for him to be such as it was for me to be an ordinary Methodist circuit rider.



On Sunday morning he preached his famous sermon on "Paul on Mars Hill". It was Ciceronian in the sweep of its eloquence and oratory. Every word fitted in its place with precision and every period was polished and carved like a block of marble prepared for its niche in the temple walls. As a pulpit oration it was well-nigh faultness in its conception, its preparation and delivery. Evidently it was a memoriter sermon, for I heard him deliver it in later years and he did not vary in a word, a sentence or a climax. But it was worth repeating, and it was worthy of several hearings. It was one of the sermons in the lifetime of even a great preacher. It had thought as well as diction, and power as well as polish. It was not a dead oration; it was instinct with life and aflame with outbursts of unction and spiritual fervor. It swept that conference like a tempest.

While I am sketching Bishop Doggett and his dignity as a preacher and Bishop I will relate an incident in my observation of him at a much later period. I have spoken of his episcopal bearing on all occasions and the reserve in his manner in private and in public. This incident brought out the loftiness of this dominant quality in his character. He was a guest at Martha Washington College while the venerable Dr. Dupree was President. A number of ministers and a few laymen were present to pay their respects to him. He was the center of the occasion.

Evening dinner was announced and Dr. Dupree lead the way to the dining-room. It was in the basement of the building and was reached by a stairway rather steep. Bishop Doggett followed. When about two-thirds of the way down the stairs he caught his foot and tripped and as he sank to the step it threw his body, not severely, but rather gently forward and he continued on down the few remaining steps on



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his hands and knees. As he reached the bottom he galloped three or four paces out into the room. Dr. Dupree and others rushed around him to help him up and asked him if he was hurt. He brushed the dust from his knees in a very dignified way and said: "Well, no. I feel no sense of injury or discomfort from the experience, but it was a very undignified performance for a Bishop."

At that Chattanooga Conference I heard two other sermons that made a very profound impression on me. One of them was by Rev. Jno. M. McTeer, the old Presiding Elder and the famous field preacher of the conference. It was on the text: "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings." As a piece of pulpit declamation it was masterful and its religious spirit moved on a high tide. It had been prepared and was preached by the request of the conference.

The other one was by a boyish-looking fellow with yellow hair, youthful face and twinkling eyes. He looked to be about nineteen or twenty years of age. I wondered why such a youngster was put up when there were so many distinguished ministers present. But my wonder increased as he proceeded, not that they had put him up, but at the marvelous gifts and gorgeous flights of the young fellow's oratory. I afterward learned that it was Rev. S. A. Steel, who at that time was a student at Emory and Henry College. He was known far and wide as the boy preacher of all that country. His eloquence was something extraordinary for his years. He has since become so well known, even to this generation of young ministers, that I need not write more of him in this connection.

I renewed my acquaintance with Rev. W. W. Pyott, the man who had the circuit when I was at Professor Burkett's school and under whom Rev. James Atkins, Jr., was the assistant. I told him the object of my visit and he said he

was well acquainted with Dr. E. E. Wiley, the President of Emory and Henry College, and would gladly introduce me to him and speak a good word for me. It was not long until we met him. He was an ideal man in his appearance for such a position. He was faultlessly dressed, of medium size, well proportioned, smoothly shaven face of wonderfully classic mold, keen black eyes, a shapely head covered with short white hair and a manner of dignity and reserve. I stated my case to him and he listend with interest to my story. But he was cool, deliberate and distant, and when I was through he said in a slow but distinct tone:

"I am glad to meet you and I am glad that you want to complete your education. No young man is prepared to begin his work in the ministry until he hast at least taken a thorough college course. We have a good school at Emory and Henry and a number of young ministers are there in preparation. Your tuition will not cost you anything, but your board and incidentals will cost you in the neighborhood of two hundred dollars per year. It will take you two, probably three, years to graduate. That will depend upon how far advanced you are and your ability to stand the examination. Now if you conclude to come we will be glad to have you and we will do the best we can for you."

I asked him if there would be any opportunity for my doing anything about the college to help me make the two hundred dollars. He said that he feared not, as there were those already there who were filling those few places. That settled it with me, and as we left him I told Brother Pyott that there was no hope of my going to Emory and Henry College. He said to me: "Let's hunt Dr. John H. Brunner. He has charge of Hiwassee College and it's a good school, and I believe that he will arrange for you to go there."

It was not long until I was introduced to him. He was a very different looking man from Dr. Wiley. Really they were in sharp contrast. He was a very tall, large man. He was perhaps six feet two; had big bones well padded with solid muscles; had large feet and hands, long arms, well developed head covered with a sort of sandy hair; had mild eyes and a very amiable face. He looked like a man of big heart and pleasant, sunny disposition. His voice was soft and he assumed a sort of fatherly attitude toward me as he listened sympathetically to my statement. When I had finished he said to me:

"Where were you born and brought up?"

I had told him I was living forty or fifty miles down in Georgia; that I was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee, but was brought up mostly in Cocke County. He continued:

"Are you related to the late Colonel Creed W. Rankin?"

I told him he was my father. The tears came to his eyes as he said:

"Let me take your hand again. Your father's house used to be my home when I traveled the Newport Circuit. You were an infant then. Your father and mother were great friends of mine and so was your Grandmother Clark. I used to preach in her house. That was a long time ago, but I still have a very tender place in my heart for them. Yes, sir; we will arrange for you to come to Hiwassee College next fall, money or no money. You finish your plans where you are and I think you will be able to enter the junior year, and I will be glad for you to correspond with me in the meantime."

I thanked him heartily and as we left him I told my friend that I would go to Hiwassee; that such a man as Dr. Brunner

was the poor boy's friend. And it was true, as the sequel will abundantly show.

I want to say a few more words about Rev. T. J. Simmons, the friend who gave me much assistance on my first charge. He was a man of more than ordinary natural gifts, and had he gone into the traveling ministry in his early life and devoted himself to it he would have had more than creditable success. As a matter of fact he gave a good many years to the work of traveling as a supply and his work was always successful. He was good in revivals and had he given himself even to that sort of work he might have become noted as an evangelist. But he was a poor man with a large family and he remained in the local ranks and did what good he could in connection with his secular employment. He was a man of overflowing humor and always saw the ridiculous in everything and in everybody. He was companionable and never failed to enliven the interest of every circle he entered. He was present the day Aunt Rachel Stone played havoc with my sermon and he never lost an opportunity after that to run it on me.

Brother Simmons was quick at repartee. I will give one illustration of his quick wit. The bridge across the river was being repaired and a portion of it gave way and precipitated a number of workmen several feet into the water. One of them was severely injured. An irreligious man by the name of Hill met Brother Simmons in a crowd that very day and said to him:

"Tom, you had better be down yonder at the bridge and pray for that fellow who got hurt awhile ago."

Brother Simmons as quick as lightning replied:

"Never mind, John. If that fellow is no worse hurt and as badly scared as you were the night you were slightly

wounded when we were on picket duty in front of Altanta he will follow your example and pray for himself."

John grinned, but had nothing more to say.

I never had a truer friend than Tom Simmons. He stood by me on three occasions when the grave swallowed up the remaining members of my family and spoke words of comfort that I shall never forget. He had the heart of a brother in his bosom and he was never known to go back on a friend. In later years he moved to Texas, was a useful preacher, loved the Church, was Mayor of Denton for one term, but died a year or so ago and went to his reward. I will always revere his memory.

About this time Rev. Sam Jones began to make a stir in the conference. However, it was several years after that before he became famous as a revivalist. He was on the DeSoto Circuit just across the river from Rome and only a few miles below my old charge. I knew him well in those days and a great deal better in the years following. He created a sensation even then. He was raw in the ministry and people hardly knew how to take him, or what to make out of him. It was on this circuit that he experienced the only lapse after his reformation and conversion, but fortunately for him and the Church this one was only temporary.

In all my acquaintance with him, and it was intimate, I never heard him make the slightest reference to this episode. It was doubtless a painful and a bitter experience, and he proceeded to blot it from his memory. It was the result of overtaxed nerves, and some indiscreet physician prescribed the use of Hostetter's Bitters as a stimulant and a tonic. Sam Jones at that time was the last man on earth to tamper with that sort of a remedy. He took it and this tells the tale. I need not go into particulars.

Fortunately for him, Rev. Simon Peter Richardson was his Presiding Elder, and he proved the right man in the right place at that time. Had a man of less sympathy and less judgment been in charge of the district the world might not have heard of Sam Jones. The old Elder was an eccentric character and had a very original way of his own of saying and doing things. He had a wonderful admiration for young Jones and saw in him wondrous possibilities. He loved him like a father loves a son. And he was strong and wise and a fine judge of human nature.

As soon as he heard of the misfortune he went at once to the help of the young preacher. He did not go with a frown on his face and a Discipline in his hand, but with a heart full of love and kindness. As soon as he entered the parsonage Sam Jones went to pieces and insisted upon surrendering his credentials. He thought he had ruined everything. But the old man hooted at the idea. He said:

"Sam, cheer up, my good fellow; your trouble is that you are a very rundown and sick man. You need rest and proper medical treatment. I am here to love you and to stand by you until you get out of this and are again upon your feet. And when you are at yourself we will talk this matter all over; but we will not discuss it now. Stop thinking about it and get well, and you will be all right. Just as soon as you are recovered I will go around your circuit with you and make it right. God is good and patient and he knows how to deal with you. Go to him in prayer and I will vouch for the result before the people and before the conference."

And he made his word good. Sam Jones regained his feet and became one of the most remarkable men of his day and generation.

Simon Peter Richardson was one of the most unique and

extraordinary men the Methodist ministry ever produced. He was a bundle of oddities. He could say the most unheard-of things in his sermons, make the people the maddest and then put them back into a good humor quicker than any man I ever heard preach. In person he was angular, had a movement, a voice and a pulpit manner all his own. He was unlike anybody else in the world. You could never anticipate him, and he always said the unexpected. He was brusque and transparent, and he was as bright as a piece of burnished silver. He sparkled from every viewpoint. He had a tremendous brain, was a great student and he was a master of Arminian theology.

He sometimes had discussions with ministers of other denominations. If they treated him fairly and conformed to the rules of public controversy he was an agreeable antagonist, but if they undertook to carry their points by sophistry or to play for the galleries for popular effect he simply stripped the leaves from the switches with which he proceeded to scourge them, and the process was something terrific.

I never grew tired of hearing Brother Richardson. Every sentence that fell from his lips was something fresh and startling. Whether in private conversation or in public discourse he never lacked for interested auditors. Everybody wanted to hear him when he visited his quarterly meetings. Even when they did not agree with him in doctrine they were anxious to listen to what he had to say.

There was never but one Simon Peter Richardson, and it is a pity that his talents were restricted to such a comparatively narrow sphere. Had he pushed himself out, like other peculiar and striking characters I have known, he would have filled as large a place in the public eye as Lorenzo Dow, Peter Cartwright or Sam Jones. He had more native talent and a

bigger brain than either of them, and as a reader and a thinker he surpassed them all. But he was not an ambitious man, cared nothing for notoriety, was satisfied with the fields assigned him by the Church and spent his life mostly in Florida and Georgia.

At the close of the term in the Resaca school I had finished my task and was ready for the junior year in college. I had informed myself as to what would be required to meet the conditions, and I had studied to that end. Professor Hodge gave me every possible assistance and he was of wonderful help to me. All that I needed was a little more ready cash to make both ends meet the first year at college. I had three months before me and determined to make them count.

So I rolled up my sleeves, entered the field and got down to business. I only needed fifty dollars and I knew I could make it. I was at home in any sphere of hard work, and after close application for ten months I needed the outdoor exercise. It was an exhilaration to me to again use the plow and the hoe, and it was not long until the pallor left my face and my ruddy complexion returned. More than that, by the first of September I had the amount necessary to supplement my limited funds, and I was satisfied.

I had made good friends and they were well-to-do. They were kind enough to tell me that if I needed help to call on them, but from early life I had learned from Wesley's writings that "debt, dirt and the devil" are the common enemies of man; and I resolved to steer clear of all of them as far as possible. I did not want to owe any man anything. And that has been the rule of my life. With this principle firmly fixed in my mind I put my money in my pocket, packed my trunk and was off for Hiwassee College.

CHAPTER XV

Two Years at Hiwassee College

It had been the dream of my life to go to college. By day I had planned for it and by night I had contemplated it, and at last the consummation of my plans was to be realized. I was at Hiwassee College!

Just over the hill and near the roadside was the home of dear old Dr. Brunner. It was an unpretentious frame structure, two stories and painted white. It was an old house, but in good repair. It was the old homestead of the Key family, and that was the name of Mrs. Brunner's people. Her father was a local preacher in his day—a grand old man, useful and prosperous. It had opened its doors from the beginning to Methodist ministers.

Old Father James Axley, a famous Methodist preacher of the pioneer days, had been entertained there times without number. He was a contemporary of Peter Cartwright, had traveled in the Middle West and finally came South with Bishop Asbury, and after years of toil in the vineyard settled some miles from the Key home, and often visited it when he preached in the community.

Old Brother Key entertained Dr. Brunner in his young days and gave his daughter in marraige to the young minister, and in the end the homestead had fallen to her.

Ex-Postmaster General D. M. Key, in President Hayes' Cabinet, was her brother, and had been brought up in that

home. He was afterward a distinguished Federal Judge. It was an historic old home. The barn, the spring and the meadow were near by. It was a typical country home of the good old days. Undulating hills were not far away and they were crowned with magnificent groves. There was an Arcadian look about the environment. It was rural and quiet.

In the vale beyond just a half mile was the college building. It was surrounded at no great distance by hills and oaken groves. The intervening spaces were interspersed with fields and wooded forests. Just below the site ran an East Tennessee stream, not far from the banks of which was a copious spring gushing from the hill. The building was a long two-story brick with substantial apartments for chapel, study hall and classrooms. It was neither majestic nor stately, but it was substantial and useful.

The old boardinghouse was a few hundred yards away, a bulky old-fashioned building, arranged in a sort of a livery-stable style—long, with a hall running the whole length below and above and small rooms on either side. The old gentleman, Donald McKinzy, who kept it, was a rare character both in appearance and in personality. But he suited his position as though he had been born for it. He had a remarkable memory, and hence he never kept books of any sort and made no entries of any kind. He held all his business in his head, and the strange thing was that he never forgot anything and made no mistakes in his accounts.

The whole surroundings, buildings, fields, hills, groves and country homes impressed me favorably. I have always been a countryman by instinct and training and it has an infatuation for me even to this good day. I saw at a glance that it was not the place for young men seeking pleasure or recreation or adventure. The wealthy and the men of high degree

would seek another place. But it was the place for sons of the middle classes seeking good advantages under favorable and inexpensive surroundings. It was the ideal place for the poor boy whose business at college was to learn and who had but little money to spend.

There was nothing to divert attention or to distract the thought or to dissipate the mind. It was the place for solitude, communion with nature and for sustained mental labor. The sky was bright, the breezes exhilarating, the fare nourishing and the course of study extensive and thorough. The teachers were plain, well qualified and unostentatious men. They were en rapport with the place and the work to be done. And from old Dr. Brunner on down they were religious men, with solid piety and consistency of life.

Young men from nearly a dozen States, just like himself mostly, were there; something more than a hundred in number, bent on work. With very few exceptions there was scarcely a sorry fellow in the bunch. Each one knew what he was destined to be and his plans were projected to that end. Some were going to make ministers, others were looking to the bar, a few were going to study medicine, some were preparing to teach and a goodly number were going to become farmers. It was the most determined, robust and hardy set of moral fellows I have ever seen gathered together. Practically all of them had a definite object before them. They knew exactly why they were there and what they intended to do after they had completed the course and entered upon life's duty. I seriously doubt if there was ever just another such a bunch of young men found in any institution of learning. It meant much to be associated with them.

At the head of them stood old Dr. Brunner, plain, unobtrusive, clean, lofty and as commanding as an old Roman.

He was large of body and of mind and the magnitude of his spirit was the striking feature in his splendid personality. He was every inch a man; quiet, strong, determined and cultured. You could not look into his open face and imagine that an impure thought had ever found lodgment in his mind; no dissimulation, no double-dealing, no sinister purpose, no self-aggrandizement in his nature, nor did he tolerate such qualities in his student body. He loved them like sons and trusted them like patriots. Woe betide the miscreant who ever betrayed his confidence or imposed upon his indulgence! He was a great man, a great teacher, a philosopher of the olden type.

I will never forget him as he arose in his stateliness the first morning after the session was organized and delivered his first of a series of daily talks to us. They were sententious, monosyllabic, forceful and packed with wisdom. There was nothing of eloquence or oratory or studied effect; they were the simple epigrammatic utterances of a man who had traveled far along the way of life, had read its books, experienced its difficulties, mixed with its men and had thus matured himself in the work of its practical affairs. He was the ideal man and teacher to lead that bunch of determined, ambitious young men.

I shall always thank God that I was one of that crowd who began training under him in the long, long ago. He completed in my life and character all that had been made possible by the helping hand of old Professor Burkett.

I entered the junior year after the examination and the class was a large one. In Greek, in Latin, in Mathematics, in the Sciences and in Literature I had the best of associates. They were an inspiration to me. I have never seen such persistent and good-natured rivalry. It was square, open,

honest, gentlemanly. No one cheated, no one sought an undue advantage; it was wholesome and stimulating.

To dive into those books and touch elbows with those thrifty fellows was like drinking from the fountain of life. It was a mental stimulus that generated force and aspiration. We had our two literary societies and they gave scope and opportunity for the development and exercise of our gifts and graces as public speakers. There we met in the arena and measured swords in the intellectual combats of college life. How the sparks used to fly in our society debates!

I had nothing to do, fortunately, but to devote myself to study. By strict economy and frugality I had means barely sufficient to meet my actual expense, and I measured the worth of a dollar with scientific accuracy. My clothing was plain, but simple; and board in that out-of-the-way country place was exceedingly reasonable. There was no need and not much opportunity for spending money foolishly, and there was no boy there who was either able or desirous to indulge in luxuries.

If I had the time or thought it would be interesting I could take up the after-lives of many of that class and prove the beneficial influence of their training by the success they scored in the various pursuits awaiting them. A number of them distinguished themselves in the ministry, in the profession of law, in policits and in the art of letters. Nearly every year since then I have met them here and there in the various walks of life and I have found them invariably the best type of citizens, useful and successful.

Hence I have always been impressed with the importance of the place of the small college in the preparation of boys for the duties and responsibilities of life. Such was the moral and religious influence of the place that the faculty sent only

two boys home during my stay of two years in that school, and they were city boys.

We had a good Church organization; it had been there for years, and in it we found a snug Church home. We had a dedication of the new building and Dr. David Sullins preached the sermon. It was the first time I had ever seen him, though he was one of the famous preachers of the hill country. He was President of Sullins' College at Bristol at that time. College boys have wonderful ideas of oratory and eloquence, and we all knew something of Dr. Sullins' reputation, and our expectations soared high when it was announced that he would dedicate our College Church.

The day came and it was balmy and beautiful. The audience was large, and when he entered the door we recognized him. He was then in his prime; tall, wiry, symmetrically developed, a head that would have done Apollo credit, auburn hair, a splendid eye and graceful in every movement. His subject was: "Man's Co-operative Part in the Salvation of the World." That theme gave him access to every department of Scriptural treatment, and he made ample use of the liberty thus accorded him. What a rich voice! Its tones were like the rhythmic brook and his inflections were as soft and elastic as the zephyrs of spring. He took occasion in the progress of his sermon to take up the different books of the Bible in order to show how God used the temperaments, the intellect and predilections of men as the media through which to make a revelation of the divine to the human. When he came to the Psalms he dwelt upon that passage: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, oh God." And he pointed out how David, when chased and hounded by the enemy in after life, thought of one of the pastoral incidents in his shepherd experience. Then he

described a deer with the deep bay and hot breath of the pursuing hounds upon its track; how it flew upon the wings of the wind, up the mountain, down the gorge, across the field and over the hill with dogs coming closer and closer as it became heated and exhausted in the chase; and when it looked like the little animal was ready to fall from weariness and thirst it plunged into the stream and found refreshment from all peril as it submerged its body and floated out of sight and danger; and when he reached that thrilling period the boys forgot themselves and broke out into a lusty hand-clapping. We had all been in a deer chase many a time and the picture was so life-like that we forgot we were in Church.

We had our annual revival and the meeting was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We had a fine old man, Uncle Jimmy Smith, as our pastor. He was not a learned man, but he was genuinely religious, and he was a man of striking personality. Nearly all those old hill preachers in Holston had marks that differentiated them from nearly all other men with whom I have been associated. They stood out in some distinct way and had some special endowment that gave to them a style of ministry all their own.

Uncle Jimmy was one of that type. He was a large and rather bulky man; had a red head mingled with gray and his hair was short and bristly. It looked like a heavy frost had recently fallen upon it. His face was florid and looked as though a dull razor had just gone over it. He had a rasping voice. There was not an element of oratory or a strain of eloquence in his makeup. He even had the old Hardshell twang and was liberal with small white balls of spittle when he warmed up to his subject. But he had ideas and he had religion, and we all loved him. But his preaching was far from the college boy's conception.

He was really embarrassed every time he appeared before us. During the year I was with him at a District Conference. Dr. E. E. Wiley was present. Uncle Jimmy made a speech on some subject, but it was hard to tell what he was driving at. Dr. Wiley concluded to have a little fun at the old man's expense and he arose in a humorous manner to a point of order. The chairman told him to state his point. Uncle Jimmy stopped short and stood and looked at him. The Doctor in a very facetious manner said:

"Mr. Chairman, I suggest that Brother Smith stop long enough to show us the point."

The conference enjoyed the interruption, but Uncle Jimmy was ready for him. When the merriment ceased the old man went right on in the same vehement manner with which he was speaking when interrupted and said:

"Mr. Cheerman, I can make pints, but I can't give men like Dr. Wiley brains to see 'um."

It brought down the house, but it brought Dr. Wiley further down than it did the house. He did good service on that circuit, but the next year the conference sent a younger man. Uncle Jimmy was disappointed, said he did not like to move, for it made him seasick to ride on a train.

At the close of the college year I had made good progress, passed all my examinations and was advanced to the senior class. I went back to Georgia to spend my vacation. My money was all gone and it was necessary for me to hustle during the summer months in order to replenish my finances for the next year.

I began to cast about for some sort of a job. One day Rev. P. G. Reynolds, the pastor on the Calhoun Circuit, close to where my uncle was then living, called over to see the family, and when he found me there he said that I was the very



REV. JNO. H. BRUNNER, D. D.



fellow he was looking for; that he wanted to begin a meeting at Mount Horeb, several miles in the country, and that he wanted me to go along and help him in the meeting.

Well, I had not fallen onto anything yet and thought I had just as well go with him and give him a few days in the services, thinking that something might turn up out there that I could do. It was in a fine community of excellent people. They were sturdy and well-to-do farmers. After the second day Brother Reynolds was called home on account of sickness in his family and turned the meeting over to me. I took hold of it in my own way.

I organized twenty-five or thirty of the best members into an evangelistic campaign, in squads of two and two, and gave direction to them to visit every house within a radius of five miles and hold prayers with the family and tell them about the meeting, and to urge them to attend. I went with one of them. It had its magic effect. That night the house was packed and so was the altar. Then every day and night for ten days the meeting reached a high tide. Nearly everybody in the community out of the Church was converted. It was a great meeting. Among them was a little bright-faced, sun-tanned boy twelve or fourteen years of age. At the closing service I took all their names to carry back to Brother Reynolds so that he could return in a few days to receive them into the Church. That little boy's name was W. W. Watts, now one of the leading members of the Texas Conference.

As I stepped into the buggy to be driven back to town old Brothers Watts, White and Stanton came up and expressed their great appreciation of my services. It rather embarrassed me, for I did not realize that I had done anything much. And as they told me good-bye they handed me a sealed letter. I thought it was given to me to mail when I reached town.

After I had gotten out three or four miles the brother who was driving me said he was anxious to know what was in that letter. The fact is, he already knew, but I was as ignorant of its contents as a child. I had not the remotest suspicion. When I told him we would drop it in the office when we got to town he laughed and said:

"No, we won't, either. You open that letter; it is addressed to you, boy."

I pulled it out and sure enough it was to me. I opened it and it contained a note of thanks and three twenty-dollar bills! It knocked the breath out of me, and to save my life I could not keep from breaking down and crying like a child. Nobody out there knew my condition except myself. I never dreamed of receiving a cent from those people. How did they know it? I never did find out unless either Brother Reynolds or the good Lord gave them the information. It was a Godsend to me. It solved my next year's problem. I knew that I could supplement it with enough to almost carry me through the next year. It was not long until I was at work making the necessary balance. And when the vacation closed I was prepared to continue my work.

Nearly every boy was back in his place and we had a very large senior class. We at once got down to business. My, but it was a year of application and progress! Dr. Brunner gave us every encouragement. We went into those books like Trojans and cleaned them up as fast as we reached them. We kept up our society work. This was a great advantage. We made progress in the art of public speech; and right here I want to record one interesting incident. I might record many, but this one will be illustrative of many. It will give the reader an idea of the sort of material we had in that school.

There had come to the college a young fellow from one of the remote rural districts of Georgia by the name of Clay. That year he was a junior. He was an awkward fellow, bright, opened-eyed and alert. He was a member of my society. As the term advanced we had a joint discussion between representative juniors in the two societies. Clay was one of those from our side. I was appointed to take charge of him, help him with his speech and groom him for the public occasion. I began to prepare him, helped him to write his speech, took him out every evening for a week prior to the time, had him to mount a log and repeat his speech to me; and I would criticise his gestures, his pronunciation and so on. The evening before the discussion he did well and I complimented him and told him that we ought to win on his effort if he would do that well before the judges. He jumped up in the style of the country boy, cracked his heels together and said he was sure to do his part.

Then we sat down on the log and had a general talk. I asked him what his plans were after he had finished the course, for every boy there had his plans. He grew enthusiastic and said: "I am going back to Georgia and locate in Marietta, my county town, and study law. Then I am going to hang out my shingle and practice until I make some money, then I am going to the Legislature. The next year I will go to the State Senate and become Speaker of that body, and then I am going to Congress."

I looked at him and smiled and told him that he had cut out a big job. "Yes, but you keep your eye on me," he said.

He asked me what my plan was. I told him I would join the Holston Conference the following fall, consecrate myself to the ministry and become a useful preacher. He said: "That's all right, but there's not much money in it.

If you'll make a big one you'll have a wide opportunity to distinguish yourself, but if you are only to be a one-horse Methodist preacher it won't amount to much. I'd be a big one or none."

I have long since forgotten how Clay acquitted himself that night, or which side won the victory, but I have never forgotten the inspiration that played in that young fellow's face as he sat there and unfolded his plans to me. And now, diverging from the time I am writing long enough to follow that boy out several years in life, I will say that he carried out his plan to the letter, and while Speaker of the Georgia Senate the Legislature elected the successor to the late General John B. Gordon and his name was Senator Alexander Stephens Clay! He served two terms in the United States Senate and was just entering upon his third when, two years ago, he was stricken with illness and died, mourned by the whole State. He did what he started out to do.

I spoke just now of old Father Axley, and while it is not connected with my experience at college, yet the incident is interesting and it did happen before my day right there in that community, and I will record it. It was told me many years afterward by Judge D. M. Key. The Judge was not a religious man and did not set much store by things of that sort at that time. He afterwards became a Churchman. It was far back in his boyhood, and I will let him relate it:

"It was in the early summer after we had worked out the crop a time or two when a protracted drouth struck the community. For weeks we had no rain, the creeks dried up, the ground was turned to dust, the corn was twisted and almost blistered, the grass was parched, we were suffering for water and it looked like ruin and want were going to overtake us. My father and the people generally became alarmed and they

appointed a day for fasting and prayer and sent for Father Axley to come and conduct the services. We gathered just below the college under the campground pavilion early. It was Sunday morning. The people began to sing and pray. About ten o'clock we looked up the road and saw the old man coming along slowly through the dust on his horse. He rode up and hitched and came into the pulpit. He was an old man and very stern. Boys fought shy of him. There was something awfully solemn in his face and manner. He made us think of the Judgment.

"He arose and announced a hymn and called us to prayer. I shall never forget that petition as long as I live. It was the most fearful confession of the sins of the people that ever fell on mortal ears. He told God that we were getting exactly what we deserved, only it was not severe enough; that we had forfeited all right to mercy or help; that we merited the damnation of hell, and that we had no ground of hope until we had sufficiently repented in sackcloth and ashes. It made the cold chills creep over me and the cold sweat broke out on my face as he proceeded. Then he changed his tactics and called the attention of God to the innocent birds dying of thirst, to the insects that were suffering, to the fishes in the pools that were perishing and to the poor cattle that had committed no wrong, and asked the Lord to turn his thought away from the wickedness of man for the moment and have mercy upon the innocent creatures suffering on account of man's ingratitude, sinfulness and untold iniquities, and to send the early and the latter rain to them. The men and the women and the children cried aloud as they became overwhelmed with a sense of fear and penitence under the awe-inspiring petition of the old man. I have never witnessed just such a scene. His prayer must have lasted over an hour.

"When he saw the effect he closed and told them now to hasten home, that God would visit them with rain. I was frightened out of my wits and I climbed over the fence and started on a run through the field a near way home. When I reached the top of the hill I heard it thunder and I looked and saw a dark cloud rapidly approaching; before I reached the gate the heavens seemed to open and the rain came down in torrents and blinded me. Many of the people were so thoroughly drenched that they were almost drowned. The whole earth was soaked and we made fine crops. Now I do not know whether the prayer of Father Axley had anything to do with that rain or not, but these are the facts beyond doubt."

I have visited time and again the grave of Father Axley. When Bishop McTyeire was writing the History of Methodism he visited that section and I took him to that historic spot. As he gazed at the long old grave he said it may not be remembered by many, but James Axley came within four votes once being elected to the Episcopacy.

Now returning to my school experience at Hiwassee, the commencement occasion soon came round. It was a gala day. We were in our best attire. The country smiled beautifully. The crowd was large, as was always the case. The examinations were passed, the speeches made, the honors announced, the fatherly address delivered by Dr. Brunner, the diplomas given and the degrees conferred, and we were all ready to say good-bye and turn in the direction of home.

How different my feelings from those when I left Student's Home! Then I was run down in health, worn by toil, oppressed by burdens too heavy to bear, exhausted from lack of proper nourishment, my work only begun, with the hope of the future not overly bright and no visible provision for the

next step in life. But I had gone through Hiwassee like a white boy and had not repeated the experience of hardship, of blistering toil, of trembling fears, of pressing want, of groveling poverty, of sleepless nights through which I had passed in the former school. I had completed the course with my head up, my pocket reasonably supplied, my wants met, my hope buoyant, my task completed and with my future inviting.

Yes, I was ready for the work of my life and my heart was throbbing with the fullness of my purpose and desire to plunge into it, and the loving benediction of dear old Dr. Brunner resting upon my head and my heart.

I was as happy as a boy without a wish or a care. Like the eagle long imprisoned in his narrow cage, when liberated plumes his pinions and cleaves the air in his proud flight to greet the king at the gates of day, so I was thrilled with the thought that at last the bars of my prison doors were broken and I was ready to try my strength in the intellectual heavens of a new-born era.

My whole being was aflame with the feeling that my school days were ended and that my face, luminous with the glow of an enlarged hope, was then turning towards the goal of a long-cherished ambition amid the sphere of life's chosen vocation. So with a bounding spirit I bade the venerable President, the indulgent professors and the congenial classmates a fond adieu and hastened my footsteps toward the humble home where there was a joyous welcome awaiting me.



CHAPTER XVI

The Conference and My First Year in Holston

About the middle of the seventies I was again off to conference at Asheville, North Carolina. This time it was Holston, and Western North Carolina was then in this conference. I made it convenient to stop at Mossy Creek, the place where a few years before I had taken the train for Dalton; and from there made a short excursion into the Dumpling Creek neighborhood to visit my father's relatives. I had not been among them since boyhood.

It was a Presbyterian community and thickly settled. They could not understand how I became a Methodist, but they had me to preach on Sunday. I must have met several hundred kinsmen. My grandfather's old home was only seven miles away, but he was dead and my two favorite aunts were married and gone. My old Dutch step-grandma was living, but I had no desire to see her or to revisit the scenes of my strenuous two years of boyhood life at that place.

From thence I visited school friends at Warrensburg, a country town in Greene County, on the beautiful Nola Chucky; and in company with three companionable young men we made the journey by private conveyance. The road lay along the tortuous banks of the French Broad, along an opening cut by the stream through the Blue Ridge Range.

The railway now occupies the old roadbed, but then no steam engine had ever sounded its shrill whistle through those mountains and gorges. It was an inspiring trip through the most romantic section of that far-famed "Land of the Sky". The beauties and variable tints of an autumnal season were scattered in profusion over the pristine forests, and it would take the genius and the pen of an artist to do that picture full justice.

On the evening of the third day we reached Asheville, a picturesque town nestled amid the foothills of the frowning Blue Ridge. At that time, far removed from easy access to the outside world, the town had a life all its own; quiet, hospitable, social and intelligent. And there were evidences of prosperity. The Church was strong even then. That was my second view of the Holston Conference, noted for its orators and eloquent men. My interest was not so intense as at first, as I had gotten somewhat used to such gatherings. Still my interest was great. I gazed upon a number of aged men whom I had seen in the years gone by at my grandmother's home, but they did not remember me. I was timid and made myself known to but few of them. Among the leaders at that time were Jno. M. McTeer, George W. Miles, A. J. Frazier, Grincefield Taylor, David Sullins, Frank Richardson, B. W. S. Bishop, C. T. Carroll, E. E. Wiley, Carroll Long, S. W. Wheeler and others. I eyed them and studied them with care.

Bishop Doggett, stately and majestic, presided. He was the same superior-looking dignitary whom I saw in the chair at Chattanooga. One day as he came out of the building near where I stood I timidly approached him and introduced myself to him, the first Bishop whose hand I had ever grasped. But he was so dignified and measured that I felt overawed and abashed and retreated from his presence as soon as pos-



sible. On Sunday he preached a great sermon. He never preached any other kind. His subject was the "Two Resurrections: the Spiritual and the Bodily". And it was a masterful effort. Its effect was wonderful. After his death a volume of those great sermons was published by our House, but not even one edition of them was exhausted. To me this is incomprehensible. No such finished pulpit orations have ever been put into Southern Methodist literature. But they failed utterly to strike a popular chord when committed to cold, dead print.

I do not remember anything specially interesting that transpired at that conference, except the reading of the appointments. This part of any conference session is always interesting. Along with a large class I was received into the conference and I was read out junior preacher under Dr. J. H. Keith, on the Marion Circuit, Smyth County, Virginia. I had never heard of the place before, but the next morning with my three companions I started back down the same road over which we had come in order to reach the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad to take passage for my field of labor. All four of us were assigned work back in Tennessee except myself. With high hopes and buoyant spirits we discussed our plans and prospects. I was transported with the thought that I had been received into the conference and was given a place to work. It made no difference to me if it was away up in Virginia where everything and everybody were strange to me. It was an open field and that was enough for me.

When I reached Marion I found it the shire town of Smyth, situated in one of the most beautiful blue-grass valleys in the world. A branch of the Holston River flowed through it and the mountains in the distance and on either side guarded its

sanctity like supernatural sentinels. It is one of the most beautiful sections of country upon which my eyes have ever gazed. Throughout the county I found the people well-to-do farmers and cattlemen; thrifty, hardy, moral and intelligent Many of them had been educated at Emory and Henry College, not far below. The town itself was made up of most excellent people.

The very afternoon that I arrived a man came in from Greenwood Church to see if either one of the new preachers had come. He said they had a good meeting in progress. I joined him and held service that night. I remained a day or two and dropped out long enough to go back to town and preach Sunday morning. In the afternoon I went to Mount Carmel, three miles up the valley, and preached. In the progress of my discourse Uncle John Killinger, whom I did not know, got happy and emitted a regular warwhoop that knocked me clear off the track. He often did that, as I afterwards learned. That night I held service again in town. I was given a splendid reception. I was the first young preacher that they had ever had on that circuit, and the young people took to me. On my way home after service to spend the night with old Brother Henry Sprinkle I overheard a conversation among some girls. One of them said: "Well, he has knocked all our chance at him out, for he distinctly said that 'he was determined not to know anything among us except Christ and him crucified'." The remark was a little irreverent, but it was witty.

My cash had run low, I had no horse and the railway did not reach the remote portions of the work. So imagine my surprise when one day a committee waited on me and presented me a spanking black horse with a brand-new saddle, bridle and saddlebags. He was a beauty. I was never so set

up in all my life. He was the pride of the valley. I learned to love him like a brother. And my love for those good people had no words to express itself. I did not spend much time in town, but careered over that valley and those hills and among the hospitable families on the work.

I finished the meeting at Greenwood and plunged into another one down at Mount Zion. It was on the river out in the mountains among a mining population. They worked the Baryta mines. A few were substantial farmers. The meeting developed a marvelous interest from the word go. The house was crowded and the altar was filled with penitents at every service. It was the noisiest meeting I ever attended. Sometimes it was tumultuous.

One morning I wanted to talk to the penitents, but the confusion was so great that I could not be heard. I finally succeeded in getting them all quiet but one big fat German. In spite of himself he would continue to shout out in a suppressed voice: "Religion has a power in it." I remarked to him: "Yes, Paul made that discovery several centuries ago." That touched him off and he rejoined: "Vell, von ting vas sure and dat vas Paul's head vas level von time." That started the thing off and I made no further effort to quiet it.

In that meeting I had scores of conversions, but one of them was the most remarkable in my experience. It was Z. N. Harris. He was a heavy-set fellow, about forty years old, with a striking face, a big head covered with reddish hair and a long, flowing beard of the same complexion. He had the most determined look upon his face that I had ever seen. At one of the night services he was present—the first time he had ever been seen at Church. To the surprise of everybody he came to the altar and became greatly concerned. He said to me: "Preacher, I am the hardest case you ever tackled.

I am as mean as the Devil. For years my life has been an awful life. Do you reckon there's any chance for me?" I encouraged him all I could, but he left without any comfort.

On my way home to spend the night with Brother Meek he said: "That man Harris is the terror of this community. He dropped in here a few years ago after the war and took up with a woman and they have been living away up the river in a wild sort of place. I believe he is a wildcat distiller. He is a professional gambler. He spends much of his time following the courts around when they are in session plying his trade. He is a dangerous man and keeps the worst sort of a crowd about him. Decent people never go near his home. If he is converted in the meeting it will be a great blessing to us all."

The next morning Harris was back at service at the altar. He seemed much troubled. At the close of the service I had another talk with him. Among other things, I advised him to go to town and get a license and let me marry him to the woman who was then only his common-law wife. He wanted to know if that would do any good, that they had four children. I explained to him that it would be complying with God's law.

That night we had a great crowd. During the preliminaries some one handed me the marriage license. I stated the nature of the document and requested the parties to come forward, and Harris from the men's side and the woman from the women's side came to the altar. I proceeded to marry them and the congregation certainly craned their necks and looked at each other in astonishment. I preached from the text: "How camest thou in hither not having on the wedding garment?" Harris and his wife were the first to prostrate themselves at the mourner's bench. I have never seen greater



anguish. The people prayed and we talked to them until late. By and by Mrs. Harris came through with a long, loud shout of praise and it electrified the congregation. We had quite a scene. Harris struggled on and about midnight he sprang from his knees and made the welkin ring with his praises. It was the old-time religion. The audience went wild and I stood in the pulpit and watched them. It was hardly safe for me anywhere else. It was a glorious scene.

At the close Harris came to me and said: "Preacher, you must go home with me and spend the night." He mounted his horse with his wife behind him and we started up the stream, winding in and out along the many curves and indentures. When we reached his residence it was situated in a natural basin among the hills with a goodly section of open land around him. It was a log house with two rooms and a loft. I went in while he cared for the horses. He entered and stirred the fire and seated himself and proceeded:

"Preacher, this is the first time that a good man has ever been in this hut. Your sort are strangers here. Now I want to wake up the kids and have 'em baptized. Then I want you to dedicate this home. We've gone into this business and we want to go the whole hog."

I baptized the four children and then in a prayer dedicated the home. He took me up the ladder to the loft where there was a strange sort of bed; and with all sorts of covering over me and a fine opportunity to study astronomy through the cracks, I never slept more delightfully in my life. The next morning he gathered up several decks of cards and threw them into the fire and he dumped three or four ugly-looking old army pistols and a few savage knives into the stream. He went at the new life in the most business-like sort of way. He told me much of his past life, and it was as thrilling as a

romance mixed with the dramatic and the tragic. It would make a book within itself and it would read like a yellow-back novel, except it would contain the truth.

When Dr. Keith arrived upon the work I had more than one hundred applicants ready for Church membership. They were there and at other places. We made Z. N. Harris a steward and a Sunday-school superintendent, and he became as zealous in the cause of righteousness as he had been in his life of wickedness. He never had but one setback, and that did not last long. A bully in the neighborhood who did not like him, anyway, took advantage of his Church relation to try to impose on him one day and attacked him. The old habit got the upper hand of Harris and that man had the rest of his life to repent of his mistake. But it cost Harris his liberty for a season. He came out of it all right and several years after that I asked the preacher at conference, who had traveled that charge the previous year, how Harris was doing, and he informed me that he was the same earnest and devoted man to the Church.

We had a great year. Dr. Keith was a most lovable man and he treated me with every kindness. We had good meetings at all our societies. It was one of the happiest years of my life. I had a great time with the good country people. It was in the midst of sugar orchards. They made tree sugar, and many a night I stood around the campfires and helped the young people stir off syrup and tree sugar. I had great influence with them. Some of the best friends of my life I made on that circuit. I have namesakes to this day scattered over it. The good women knit hose for me, the young ladies supplied me with yarn gloves and nubias, the merchants furnished me with clothes, even shoes were presented to me. I scarcely had a dollar of expense. I had seventeen appoint-



ments and usually I preached every other day and twice or three times on Sunday. They gave me that fine horse and paid me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash.

The year drew to a close. But before starting for conference I must tell you about a special friend on that work and my experience with him at his old father's home. His name was Mitch Burkitt, but not related to my old Tennessee teacher. He was tall and gangling, with claybank hair and complexion and his long, shaggy beard was of a flaxen hue. His face was long and bony. He was horridly ugly and not overly smart. But all that he lacked in good looks and intelligence he more than made up in goodness. He took a great fancy to me because I was kind to his old father and used to go out to his home in Brushy Mountain and hold service for him, since he was not able to get out to the Church.

The first time I did this a funny thing happened to me. The house was a log building, long and substantial, but unsightly. And it occupied a lonesome-looking spot. The big room was cleared after supper and planks were brought in to make improvised seats. The neighbors had been invited and quite a company gathered. After the service I noticed that a number of the elderly and a few of the younger women lingered. After awhile Mitch escorted me to the second floor by a rude sort of stairway. I found one long room up there running the length of the house. On either side there were two big fat feather beds standing up high and one at the end. It was not long until I had climbed up and tumbled into one of them head and ears and pulled the good homemade blankets and quilts over me for a night of rest.

I did not immediately fall to sleep, and after a short time Mitch came up to the head of the stairs and softly called me. I listened and heard nothing more from him, and as I lay

there quietly I heard two of those women tip upstairs as noiselessly as two cats and stealthily undress and get into a bed just across the room. Directly two others tipped up and did likewise, and so on until all four of those beds were full. I lay there as quietly as a mouse and fell into a sound sleep. I awoke after daylight and was afraid to turn over, much less look out. I was in an embarrassing predicament and wondered how on earth I was to be extricated. But deliverance soon came. Mitch came bounding awkwardly up the steps and shouted: "It's time to roust out Br'er Rankins. Breakfast's 'bout ready." I threw back the cover and all four of those beds were in the same condition I had found them when I climbed the steps the night before! Those good woman had slipped out as noiselessly before day as they had come up the night before, made up the beds and were gone. And nobody ever knew but myself that they spent the night in that room with me in the home of old Brother Burkitt.

I had one more experience with Mitch. It was at my last appointment at Fulton's Chapel, the Church that he attended. I had already prepared my farewell sermon and preached it at the other places on the work. It was on the regulation text—"Finally, brethren, farewell," etc. It was tender and touching. A large congregation greeted me. I preached effectively and moved their sympathies greatly. It was a sobbing time. They would look on my face no more and they were in tears. At the close they flocked round me and shook my hand tenderly and affectionately. They loved me.

After they were through Mitch, who had been standing off blubbering, came round and grasped my hand and said: "Br'er Rankins, it most breaks my heart to say good-bye. D'u reckon I'll never see you no more?" I told him no, that I would not return. Then he sobbed and said: "Ef I thought



"Ef I thawt yo'd never be back no more I'd have you preach my funeral 'fore you leave."

you'd never come back I'd sho have you to preach my funeral 'fore you leave these here diggins."

Now this was the greatest compliment that he could have paid me when it is remembered that in that country it was common for a neighborhood to save up two or three funerals sometimes for three or four years and then invite their favorite minister back to preach them on some great day. But it so happened that the next year I was sent to the adjoining circuit and had one appointment not far from the Burkitt home and preached to Mitch every time I went to that appointment. But the ridiculousness of the experience made that the last farewell sermon I ever tried to preach. The old custom, however, has long ago passed out of use.

During that year I made the acquaintance of that celebrated preacher, the Rev. W. E. Munsey, D. D., the most noted preacher that the Holston Conference has ever produced. Our District Conference, with Rev. George W. Miles in the chair, met at Floyd Courthouse, and Munsey was present. His health had recently failed under the strain of his pastorate in Baltimore and he was back in the hill country to recuperate. While taking this needed rest he would occasionally preach or lecture. It was my privilege at this gathering to see much of him and to hear one of his marvelous sermons. Though rundown in body he was in the zenith of his fame as a preacher. His name was on everybody's lips in all that section. He was the pulpit and platform wonder of that day. No such man had ever appeared before the listening throngs of that generation and his presence inspired great interest and expectation.

He was a very peculiar-looking man. There was something almost abnormal in his personal appearance. He was very tall and slender. His arms and limbs were long and un-

gainly. His head was not unusually large, rather cone-like in shape and as innocent of hair as a peeled onion. It is said that in his studious moments of abstraction it had been his habit for years to pluck out his hair all unconscious of what he was doing. I am prepared to believe this story, for while seated behind him one morning at Church he was constantly trying to get hold of his hair while listening to the sermon, but there was none for his fingers to touch. It was all gone.

His eyes were small and deeply set, his nostrils and lips were thin and his complexion almost saffron. He looked like a walking skeleton. And in his absent-mindedness, when in motion or in repose, he looked like a wild man. In the private circle he was as simple as a child. There was nothing repellent in his manner; anybody could approach him. He was confiding and at times helpless in his disposition. Children were fond of him, and I have seen him turn away from admiring grown people and actually play with the little tots around the fireside. He had a good sense of humor and occasionally would relate an anecdote, but for the most part he was serious and somber.

Frequently he seemed lost in reverie and he looked like a man living in dreamland. I observed him now and then as he sat in the company of his friends, or as with a quick jerk he would rise and walk back and forth across the floor, and he would be wholly unconscious of his surroundings. To me he was the most pleading and pathetic man I ever knew. When looking at you in private conversation his eyes seemed to appeal to you for sympathy and confidence.

His intellect was of an extraordinary type. He was wonderfully gifted with genius. He possessed powers of analysis of a high order. There was consecutiveness in his thinking. He had the gift of penetration, and his ability to concentrate

his attention surpassed anything I have ever known. He could positively hold his thought upon a given subject just like a physician holds the X-ray on the object of his examination. His memory was positively prodigious. I doubt if he ever forgot anything he read or heard. He combined the elements of the poet, the logician, the philosopher, the orator—a combination rarely found in one personality.

He was a profound student, a voracious reader, a systematic thinker and an idealist of the loftiest character. No wonder he was abnormal. In fact, there were times when he lived in close proximity to the borderland of insanity. Hence the rules that govern ordinary men were not applicable to him, and his conduct could not always be judged by the same standards that applied to normal men. He was the only one of his class.

As a preacher, it is difficult to describe Dr. Munsey. Often I used to listen to him in wonder and astonishment and try to study him, his style, his subject-matter, his magnetism, profound thought, his unique vocabulary, his diction, his sublime flights of oratory, his rhythmic eloquence and his poetic instinct; but he gripped me with such a spell of influence and subtle force that all my effort was impotent. I would sit and wonder and admire until I was lost amid the mazes of the man's wondrous powers of thought and speech and action. It was like the charm of magic; at times it was oppressive.

At the District Conference, when I heard him the first time, it was at the evening service and his subject was "The Lost Soul", and it gave full play to his wondrous gifts and marvelous powers. He had his manuscript before him, but rarely ever made any use of it. During the first few minutes his strange voice was rather husky and pitched on a high key. His manner was nervous and jerky and he seemed ill at ease.



His weird presence and his wild, unnatural look gave me the creeps and I sat and looked and wondered. I had possessed the same feeling in my boyhood days in passing a haunted house after nightfall. But suddenly his whole presence and attitude changed. He looked like another being. His form became erect, his movements easy and graceful and his uncanny voice took on all the mellifluent variations of the gamut. His eyes kindled into a stranger luster, his countenance brightened with an unearthly glow, his fiery thought broke forth like a volcano in action, and his words poured out like smoking torrents of lava. His imagination, bold, royal and creative, threw pictures of awful grandeur before my eyes until I was dazzled into a spell of oblivion. I was for the time being unconscious of the real world in which I was living. I was transported to a new world, a world of disembodied spirits, a frightful world, a world of interminable night, a world far removed from God and hope, a world whose dismal caverns were echoing and re-echoing with the spectral cry, "Lost, lost, lost, lost!"

At this juncture a man fainted in the audience and broke the terrible strain of tension, and when I came to myself and looked around me we were all standing, as one person, leaning toward the preacher in an attitude of expectancy. I had read of such a scene, but that was the only time in my life that I ever saw it and constituted a part of it.

This was Dr. W. E. Munsey, the product of the Holston pulpit, the man who never went to school, yet the man who had read everything and almost mastered every available department of knowledge; the prodigy of the pulpit in the hill country, the man with a meteoric career, whose end was so sudden and so pathetic. I heard him in a private talk to a crowd of us young preachers one day say:

"Boys, study to be great and useful preachers, but eschew a reputation. My reputation as a preacher has been my snare. People will not let me do otherwise than strive to meet expectations, and to gratify them I have immolated myself upon the altar of my reputation and genius. I have almost worshiped at the shrine of my intellect; and to-day when I ought to be in the prime of my useful manhood I am practically a walking wreck physically and on the verge of ruin intellectually."

He spoke earnestly, but in answer to questions we asked him. It was my fortune to hear him often, but it was not long after that conversation until his aching nerves found surcease from pain in the sleep of death, and the generous grave swept away forever the clouds that gathered around the sunset of his brilliant life.

The Methodist pulpit never saw his like before and it will never behold his like again. He had no predecessor, and it is certain that he will never have one to succeed him. Solitary, unique and original, he stands out in history alone as the only one of his type among all the preachers of world-wide Methodism.



CHAPTER XVII

Two More Years in Southwest Virginia

My next conference was at Knoxville and I brought to it my bride. She was the black-haired and brown-eyed girl who was present some years before when Aunt Rachel Stone spoiled my first sermon at Cove City. It was not long after that until our courtship began, and it was consummated a few weeks prior to the session of this conference. Her name was Fannie L. Denton and her home was Dalton, Georgia.

She belonged to an old South Carolina family and they were Methodists from time immemorial. She was well educated, refined and accustomed to the ways of polite society; but above all she was devoutly religious and devoted to the Church. As a result from that day until the present time she has been a faithful wife, a self-sacrificing mother and an earnest worker in the Church of Christ.

She accepted from the beginning all the hardships of the itinerant ministry and she has gone with me from pillar to post without murmuring or complaining. She has done her part to make my service to the Church unreserved and complete. Her children and her home have been her delight and her life and mine have been a unit in our effort to bring up our household in the fear of God and to make the gospel of his Son the chief object in our thoughts and labors. She is

still my support and stay in the work which the Church has committed to my hand.

Knoxville at that time was the leading city in East Tennessee, even as it is to-day. It is situated on the French Broad River and it is beautiful for location and the joy of all that fertile section. Methodism was strong at that point and it gave to the conference a royal entertainment.

Bishop McTyeire presided, and this was the first time I ever saw him. He was a massive man in person, strong and solid, rather slow in his movement and speech, with a great head poised on a big neck. He looked more like a great jurist than a Bishop. His voice was deep and commanding and he was the acknowledge legal mind of the Church. He was an authority in all matters of Church usage and parliamentary law.

As a preacher he was not fascinating in his style; he was deliberate and ponderous. He was an expositor pure and simple. He delighted in difficult texts and he always gave an audience something worthy of their thought, but he was not entertaining to the masses of his congregations. He was a wonderfully instructive preacher, lucid in his thinking, profound in his analysis, clear in his statements and comprehensive in his treatment of his themes.

Some years before that he held the conference for the first time, and around the table of a fashionable home the host, the hostess and a number of guests were discussing the Bishop's sermon and they had unanimously come to the conclusion that he was a poor preacher. About that time the Rev. R. N. Price walked in and joined the company at dinner. He was a very original sort of man himself, but a trifle eccentric and witty. He was also a man of more than ordinary mind and fine attainments. The hostess said to him:

"Brother Price, we have just been discussing the Bishop as a preacher and we have reached a unanimous verdict, but before we announce it we want your opinion of him."

He replied: "Well, madam, he is a very poor preacher for fools."

The verdict was reserved for another occasion and all responded in a laugh. But Brother Price sized up Bishop McTyeire as a preacher. He was supremely great in his treatment of a text, but not popular in his manner of delivery. He has long since passed away, but in history he stands out as one of the greatest Bishops of Episcopal Methodism.

At this conference I saw for the first time Rev. O. P. Fitzgerald, D. D., the editor of the Nashville Christian Advocate. He wore a suit of clothes made of blue jeans. He told us that it was presented to him by a good old North Carolina woman and that he was proud of it. I must confess that it did not impress me favorably. I got the idea that it was for effect. I suppose I was wrong. I heard him preach, but the sermon was ordinary; it was a good exhortation. But he was the most popular editor the Nashville Christian Advocate has ever had. We spoiled a fine editor when several years afterwards we made him a Bishop. He was a good man, but never a strong Bishop. He was an ideal editor.

Rev. J. B. McFerrin, the tribune of the people, was present, I think in the interest of our Board of Missions. I had seen him before, but not at close range. I met him this time and saw and heard much of him. He was a remarkable man. In person he was bulky, with a sort of a swinging motion when he walked, had a peculiarly-shaped head with well-developed powers of perception; a rugged face, a nasal twang in his voice, a winning personality, and full of wit and humor. He was a self-made man, a fine judge of human nature, ac-

quainted with the practical affairs of life and a most genial and companionable man. He was not difficult to approach, and his greatness never oppressed me.

It was my pleasure in after life to know him intimately, and in many respects the Church never had a more consecrated man. He was superlatively great in his simplicity. He was not eloquent in his diction, but he was eloquent in his thought and in his illustrations and in his magnetism. He never failed to capture his congregations.

I passed my examinations and that year I was sent to the Wytheville Station and Circuit. That was adjoining my former charge. We reached the old parsonage on the pike just out of Wytheville as Rev. B. W. S. Bishop moved out. Charley Bishop was then a little tow-headed boy. He is now the learned Regent of Southwestern University. The parsonage was an old two-and-a-half-story structure with nine rooms and it looked a little like Hawthorne's house with the seven gables. It was the lonesomest-looking old house I ever saw. There was no one there to meet us, for we had not notified anybody of the time we would arrive.

Think of taking a young bride to that sort of a mansion! But she was brave and showed no sign of disappointment. That first night we felt like two whortleberries in a Virginia tobacco wagonbed. We had room and to spare, but it was scantily furnished with specimens as antique as those in Noah's ark. But in a week or so we were invited out to spend the day with a good family, and when we went back we found the doors fastened just as we had left them, but when we entered a bedroom was elegantly furnished with everything modern and the parlor was in fine shape. The ladies had been there and done the work. How much does the preacher owe to the good women of the Church!

The circuit was a large one, comprising seventeen appointments. They were practically scattered all over the county. I preached every other day, and never less than twice and generally three times on Sunday.

I had associated with me that year a young collegemate, Rev. W. B. Stradley. He was a bright, popular fellow, and we managed to give Wytheville regular Sunday preaching. Stradley became a great preacher and died a few years ago while pastor of Trinity Church, Atlanta, Georgia. We were true yokefellows and did a great work on that charge, held fine revivals and had large ingatherings.

The famous Cripple Creek Campground was on that work. They have kept up campmeetings there for more than a hundred years. It is still the great rallying point for the Methodists of all that section. I have never heard such singing and preaching and shouting anywhere else in my life. I met the Rev. John Boring there and heard him preach. He was a well-known preacher in the conference; original, peculiar, strikingly odd, but a great revival preacher.

One morning in the beginning of the service he was to preach and he called the people to prayer. He prayed loud and long and told the Lord just what sort of a meeting we were expecting and really exhorted the people as to their conduct on the grounds. Among other things, he said we wanted no horse-trading and then related that just before kneeling he had seen a man just outside the encampment looking into the mouth of a horse and he made such a peculiar sound as he described the incident that I lifted up my head to look at him, and he was holding his mouth open with his hands just as the man had done in looking into the horse's mouth! But he was a man of power and wrought well for the Church and for humanity.

The rarest character I ever met in my life I met at that campmeeting in the person of Rev. Robert Sheffy, known as "Bob" Sheffy. He was recognized all over Southwest Virginia as the most eccentric preacher of that country. He was a local preacher; crude, illiterate, queer and the oddest specimen known among preachers. But he was saintly in his life, devout in his experience and a man of unbounded faith. He wandered hither and thither over that section attending meetings, holding revivals and living among the people. He was great in prayer, and Cripple Creek campground was not complete without "Bob" Sheffy. They wanted him there to pray and work in the altar.

He was wonderful with penitents. And he was great in following up the sermon with his exhortations and appeals. He would sometimes spend nearly the whole night in the straw with mourners; and now and then if the meeting lagged he would go out on the mountain and spend the entire night in prayer, and the next morning he would come rushing into the service with his face all aglow shouting at the top of his voice. And then the meeting always broke loose with a flood-tide.

He could say the oddest things, hold the most unique interviews with God, break forth in the most unexpected spasms of praise, use the homeliest illustrations, do the funniest things and go through with the most grotesque performances of any man born of woman.

It was just "Bob" Sheffy, and nobody thought anything of what he did and said, except to let him have his own way and do exactly as he pleased. In anybody else it would not have been tolerated for a moment. In fact, he acted more like a crazy man than otherwise, but he was wonderful in a meeting. He would stir the people, crowd the mourner's

bench with crying penitents and have genuine conversions by the score. I doubt if any man in all that conference has as many souls to his credit in the Lamb's Book of Life as old "Bob" Sheffy.

At the close of that year in casting up my accounts I found that I had received three hundred and ninety dollars for my year's work, and the most of this had been contributed in everything except money. It required about the amount of cash contributed to pay my associate and the Presiding Elder. I got the chickens, the eggs, the butter, the ribs and backbones, the corn, the meat, and the Presiding Elder and Brother Stradley had helped us to eat our part of the quarterage. Well, we kept open house and had a royal time, even if we did not get much ready cash. We lived and had money enough to get a good suit of clothes and to pay our way to conference. What more does a young Methodist preacher need or want? We were satisfied and happy, and these experiences are not to be counted as unimportant assets in the life and work of a Methodist circuit rider.

That year the conference met at Bristol, and Bishop Wightman presided. I have already given my impressions of him as a Bishop and a preacher. I have no desire to revise or add to what I have written concerning him. On this occasion he only enhanced my estimate of him.

There was nothing of special note in this gathering. The fact is it made so little impression on me that I do not recall any incident in it, except that I saw Dr. T. O. Summers for the first time. He was the most widely-read and generally-informed man I have ever known. He knew everything. He was a rotund, jolly old Englishman, with a sunny disposition and a very pleasant man to meet and to know. Young men felt very much at home in his presence. He was familiar in

his intercourse with them and would say almost anything in a jocular way to them.

At eleven o'clock he preached in one of the churches, and the brother who was to preach at night was present to hear him. The old Doctor took this as a compliment, and so at night he went back to hear the brother. John Paulett, a friend, went with him. The sermon was a very prosy affair and innocent of any special interest. On the way back to his room Paulett had the old Doctor's arm and said to him:

"What do you think of that sermon, Doctor?"

The old man immediately blurted out:

"Paulett, shut your month, sir."

They walked on about a block in quiet and he pressed Paulett's arm tightly and said in a suppressed tone:

"Paulett, the brother needs to read Summers on the Gospel of Mark very closely."

And he chuckled as they went on to his room.

That year I was appointed to the Sweetwater Female District Institute and also to Athens Station, a few miles below. This was a new school enterprise and needed organizing and I agreed to take it for a year. They were building a new church at Athens and wanted two services a month, so I had the double work. I will not have much to say about the school work, as it was routine business, and not very congenial to me. I merely did my duty by it and at the close of the term gave it up and devoted the rest of the year to the charge at Athens.

I had one advantage in my Athens charge; I was thrown with the Rev. Timothy Sullens, one of the most gifted and saintly characters I have ever known. He started out in early life in the conference and for twelve years he careered all over that mountain section, on circuits, in stations and on districts, one

of the most eloquent preachers of his day; but all at once he had a stroke of paralysis and for forty-odd years he had been, not exactly helpless, but in such a nervous state that he was unable to do any active work.

When I knew him he was an old man, full of years, rich in experience, bright in his hopes, interesting in his reminiscences. He had associated in his early life with the historic men of Methodism, and to sit and listen to him talk was a rare treat. He had heard Bishop H. B. Bascom preach and often spoke of the effect of his great sermons.

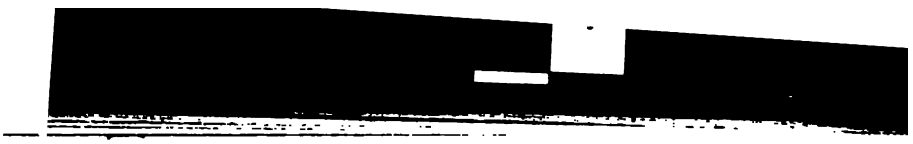
He was one of my wisest counselors. I learned more from him about my duties as a young minister than any man with whom I have ever been associated. Just before leaving for conference he said to me:

"Never notice little things. Take it for granted that no one is trying to offend you without severe provocation. Do not let your feelings lie around lose like a cat's tail for people to step on. The man who is always expecting his feelings to be hurt is never disappointed. When you go to a home always labor under the impression that the inmates are glad to see you, and when you leave make yourself believe that they are sorry you are gone. That sort of a preacher will always be welcomed, for he will make himself so agreeable that people will love him."

The conference met that year in Cleveland, and Bishop Doggett again presided. It was the time for the election of delegates to the General Conference to meet in Atlanta. Rev. John M. McTeer had always been prominent in the delegation, and he had come to expect his election. He was a man of large influence with the Bishops and some of the young preachers thought they had suffered because of his partiality and favoritism. So they concluded to rebuke the old man by



MRS. LAURA RANKIN STEVENS



leaving him off the delegation, which they did. They took up Rev. Frank Richardson and put him as chairman of the delegation. And he has been in every General Conference since then, except the one which met in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1890. It wounded Brother McTeer very deeply, but it broke the spell of his influence over the conference. He was never the same in that body.

That year I was sent to Abingdon, Virginia. It was my first full station. While not a large and prominent charge, yet it was an intelligent and an important one. Martha Washington College, the official girls' school of the conference, was located in the town. It was only nine miles below Emory and Henry College, and the two institutions had given training to many of the people of the town.

My congregation was made up largely of educated and well-informed people. It was an old Virginia town, with many old families of note living there. The Floyds, the Campbells, the Prestons, the Litchfields, and others, were prominent folk. The Church was not a stately building; simply an old substantial brick, comfortable and commodious. The membership approximated three hundred souls, and they were mostly devout people and a good type of Methodists.

Martha Washington College was a noted school, largely attended and one of the best in the connection. Pupils were there, not only from the conference territory, but from various States. Dr. Warren Dupree, one of the best types of the old South Carolina citizenship, was the President. He was a courtly gentleman of the old school; polite, cultured, high-toned and genial. He was a great advantage to me, for he was used to preachers and trained in Church work. While not a minister, yet he would occasionally conduct service for me and make most interesting talks. He was an ideal man for such a

position. His family was of the best class. They suited work of that character.

But the man who was of most service to me was Rev. E. E. Hoss, now one of our greatest Bishops. He had recently returned from the Pacific Coast, had served Asheville Station six months, and then had been elected to a professorship in Martha Washington. He was not far from my own age, but he had been out of school and in active work much longer. He was a prominent preacher even then. He had a great library and he was a close student of the best books. Though a young man, he was one of the best read men of that day. He took me under his wing and gave me access to his office and library. Really his office became my study in the forenoons, for he was busy with his class work and I had control of it. And at night we used to study together. He was a help and not a drawback to me. He was an easy man to preach to; never critical, but responsive and helpful. I had but a limited number of books; he had them by the hundreds and on all subjects. What a luxury that library was to me! And he often preached for me, and he preached with wonderful power. I have often felt that in the ardor of his younger days he was even a more popular preacher than in his more mature years.

Professor Hoss, as we then called him, was a great student. He literally devoured books, digested their contents, and his capacious memory became a veritable storehouse of knowledge. He gave large promise of coming greatness and what he is to-day is the fulfillment of the expectation inspired by his early promise as a student and a preacher. From the beginning he had a wonderfully fertile brain and a mind of far-reaching resourcefulness. I esteem it exceedingly fortunate for me that I fell under his influences in the formative

period of my ministry. It gave me a mental impetus and put me in touch with sources of information of more than ordinary value.

I had a great revival of religion in my charge that year. Scores were converted and added to the Church. The college life was deeply touched by its power. Nearly all the young ladies not already religious were won to Christ and the influence of that meeting radiated to many homes in the distance. The whole congregation received an uplift and the worship became more spiritual.

This was a hard year on me. It imposed a mental draft upon my powers to meet the demands of the pulpit and to measure up to the responsibility of the charge. I had but a limited stock of sermonic material on hand. My former charges had been large circuits, where it had been necessary to prepare but a couple of sermons a month. These would last me a whole round, and when I changed from one charge to another I repeated most of these sermons, instead of making new ones.

I was never greatly pressed in sermon-making. But in the course of five or six months on this station I had exhausted my supply and I was living from hand to mouth. Exhortations and religious talks did not do there; I had to have sermons, and measurably good ones at that.

For the remainder of the year I was in about the same condition of an anxious housewife in the spring of the year when the winter supply is about used up and the summer harvest not yet matured for use. It was mostly nip and tuck, and sometimes I was nipping without being able to tuck. My, but I had to get down to the business of intellectual replenishment! But it was the very stimulus that I needed.

I boarded that year with S. N. Honaker, a leading member

of my Church. He was not a cultured man, but he was a successful business man. He had but little imagination; he was too much of German in his temperament for that sort of faculty. He was straightforward and a matter-of-fact man. He liked a plain gospel sermon and had no appreciation of the ornate or the pictorial. On night in my sermon I used an illustration that was common in that day, though I have not heard it in a long time.

My subject was "Influence", and I held up a glass of water and said that if you were to drop a pebble into it the vibrations would not cease until every particle of fluid in the glass had been disturbed. And on the same principle, were you to throw a stone into the ocean the same result would follow—the body of water from shore to shore would be affected by it. And then I made the application.

We walked back home together and I noticed that Brother Honaker was in a deep study and had nothing to say. We sat by the fire for a time and while the rest of us were talkative he was silent. Finally he broke his silence and said:

"Brother Rankin, that was the biggest tale you told in that sermon to-night that I ever heard in the pulpit."

I did not know to what he had reference and asked him, "What tale?"

"Why, that tale about throwing that rock into the ocean. Anybody with a speck of sense knows that if you were to throw the whole of Washington County into the ocean it would not jar it one hundred feet from where it went in. I've seen the ocean and I know what I'm talking about."

That is the last time I ever used an illustration in the pulpit that was qualified to make a deeper impression than the application I wanted to make of it. The fact is, it is not a good idea to make your illustrations too impressive, however true

and applicable they may be. It is not every man in the audience who is capable of appreciating them. Sometimes, like Brother Honaker, he hangs on what he conceives to be the magnitude of the story and fails utterly to follow you in the legitimate use you desire to make of it.

This was a profitable year to me; the most profitable thus far in my ministry. I acquired a studious habit. I had it to do. I learned to systematize my time and to husband my resources. I really learned how to make sermons and revised and readjusted by methods of sermonizing. Prior to that I had prepared my sermons according to no homiletic rule. I was busy traveling from one appointment to another and had but little time to devote to consecutive thought.

I would take a text, get the meaning of it in my mind, think at it as I had opportunity, mostly on horseback or afoot, preach the result at some out-of-the-way place, and thus outline it; and then think it over again and at my next appointment make some improvement on it, and by accretion and experimentation I would reduce it to some sort of shape and completeness by the time I had gone my round. But this sort of sermonizing did not avail me in the Abingdon Station. It had to go, and in its place a real habit of sermon-making was substituted. I really learned how to make sermons that year.

While at Abingdon a pathetic sorrow came to our little circle. We had two children, the younger being born early in that year. She was a beautiful little baby girl of only seven months. One day she was taken ill and from day to day grew worse, and early one morning the angels came and kissed her away. Her little form was laid in a plot of ground in the cemetery beside the dust of the little girl of Dr. W. E. Munsey to await the resurrection of the just. It was a sad experience, but it prepared me in my ministry to be helpful to those similarly

afflicted. We never know how best to comfort others until our own hearts have been crushed and comforted.

I closed out the year successfully and had my reports all in good shape. They had paid their assessments, my salary being six hundred dollars. Back in that day no preacher was paid more than a bare living. I had learned to put my demands within the circle of my income and not go beyond it. So I was square with the world. Nobody owed me anything and I owed nobody a penny. Rather we had lived so economically that we really had a few dollars ahead.

Talk about preachers and business; I know no class of men who manage their finances with such skill and success as the average Methodist preacher. Lawyers and doctors and business men could not take the average preacher's salary and manage it as wisely and to such good ends as he does.

I left Abingdon for conference with the assurance that I would certainly return the next year. I greatly desired to return. My work had been so pleasant, and in the main so successful, that the people wanted me to return and I was anxious to serve them another year. I had been in the conference four years and had moved every year. True, I had been advanced each year in the grade of my appointments, but I cared nothing for things of that sort. I wanted the mental friction of another year with that congregation and in Professor Hoss' library. Then my pleasant associations and the attraction of that little new-made grave had a perceptible pull upon our affections. We loved Abingdon and her cultured and big-souled people. So I only bade them a temporary adieu, knowing that it would be but a week until I was back among them in my same relation as pastor.

CHAPTER XVIII

Four Years at Church Street, Knoxville

My next conference met at Knoxville again. This time Bishop H. H. Kavanaugh presided. This was the first time I ever saw him. He was one of the justly famous men in the Church. In person he was a bulky man, large in girth, big, round head covered with short stiff hair, a swarthy face with a distinctly Irish expression. He looked immense as he sat in the chair conducting the proceedings of the body. He was then quite an old man and the feebleness of age was very manifest in his look and action. He would occasionally fall into a doze seated in the chair, and once in awhile the Secretary would have to arouse him and tell him the nature of the business pending, particularly when speech-making was in progress. He was really a superannuated man in body and mind, and in this day the General Conference would retire him without hesitation.

A very amusing incident occurred one day as the proceedings were in progress. The name of Rev. W. S. Jordan was called, and he was in Rev. John M. McTeer's district. As the Presiding Elder arose to represent him the Bishop began to nod, but the speaker did not observe it and said:



"Bishop, there is nothing in the way of a charge against the brother, and yet, as is usual in his case, there is some slight complaint. Brother Jordan is a small man with large ways. He puts on airs and says and does things to which sensible and sober people object. Some of the brethren have suggested that a reprimand from the Bishop is in order and might cure him of this fault, and I recommend that you call him to the altar and exhort him on his improprieties."

The Secretary aroused the Bishop just in time for him to hear the closing words of the Presiding Elder's remarks and he only partly caught the nature of the trouble. He gradually lifted his massive form from the chair and said:

"Brethren, let us come to the scratch!"

The conference roared and this gave the Secretary time to hurriedly explain matters to him.

"Well, let the brother present himself at the bar of the conference and the chair will discharge the duty."

Brother Jordan was a very diminutive man in size with a red beard and mustache. He rose back in the room and slowly walked down the aisle like a little boy at school going forward to take his merited punishment. When he reached the altar and stood with downcast eyes under the towering and massive form of the Bishop the contrast between them was so striking that the conference again broke into a fit of laughter. The old Bishop was a man of fine humor and the ludicrous aspect of the scene caused him to stand for a moment and chuckle with suppressed merriment. Finally he assumed a dignified pose and proceeded:

"My brother, variety is the spice of life. Without it our human nature would be a very prosy affair. Dead monotony is irksome and the man who falls into it stagnates socially and religiously. God has given us variety because it adds zest and

freshness to our experience. The man is a very dull man who does not appreciate variety. But when your variety amounts to impropriety it is time for you to call a halt, sir."

At that juncture the conference sent forth another peal of mirthfulness and the old Bishop motioned Brother Jordan to his seat. He was a very kind-hearted old man and really did not want to hurt the young brother's feelings, and I think he turned the whole thing into a burlesque on purpose.

On Sunday morning a great congregation crowded the church to hear his sermon, for he had a great reputation as a preacher. And notwithstanding his advanced age the fires of a brilliant genius were still slumbering in his deep nature. All that was necessary was for a great occasion to stir him into action, and a large audience always seemed to inspire him. Such was the case that morning.

At first he moved slowly and his mind plodded along in a sort of prosaic manner. He was halting and hesitating like a man feeling his way in order to make sure of a good beginning. In other words, the trail seemed cold and he was cautiously scenting his game. But he gradually warmed up to his subject and he moved triumphantly into the heart of his theme. His eyes lost their dullness, his ponderous form became easy in its movements, his thought kindled into an inextinguishable blaze, his voice articulated like deep-toned thunder, and all his gifts as a natural-born orator came into brilliant play.

He had large imaginative faculties, not those of the poet, but the sublime kind, gorgeous and climacteric. I was reminded of the rush of the mountain torrent pouring wildly over the precipice down into abysmal caverns, sending back its distant echoes like the resounding stroke of some colossal Titan; or, to change the figure, it made one think of the storm-

god aroused from the slumbers and moving with thunderpeal through the heavens and swooping in awful grandeur upon the hills and the valleys, jarring you with frightful concussions and blinding you with sudden flashes of splendor.

For an hour and a half he held his audience at will and they followed every word he uttered with breathless interest, and when he reached his conclusion and his voice died away into silence there was a sigh of relaxation. The sermon, plus the man, was something wonderful and inspiring. It was not scholarly or learned, but it was deep and broad in its thoughtfulness; its diction was not of the soft and culture type, but it was rugged and suited to the personality of the man; his subject-matter was not bookish or specially literary, but it was aflame with intelligence and royal in the sweep of its conception.

The Bishop was well read and his familiarity with the doctrines and polity of the Church was extraordinary; and he was sufficiently acquainted with general literature to give to his pulpit ministrations the stamp of a man of education. He was not a good parliamentarian, but as a preacher in the open field of genius and oratory he was the greatest of his day and generation. That was the first and the last time I was ever privileged to hear him, but he left such an impression upon me that he stands out before me to-day as one of the greatest pulpit speakers in American Methodism.

When the time came for the reading of the appointments I was as placid as a May morning. I knew where I was going and was only waiting to hear the announcement in order to take the train and return to my Abingdon charge. But I was startled out of my wits when the old Bishop read:

"Church Street Station, George C. Rankin."

I never heard the announcement of another place or name.

It knocked me clear out of the proceedings. I came to myself, however, when a lady just behind said:

"Well, I do not know who that man Rankin is, but one thing certain, I do not intend to love him or have anything to do with him. They had no business to send him here to take Brother Burnett's place."

And she snubbed like a crying child. Brother J. S. Burnett had just finished his third year at that charge, and many of them expected him back; and this good woman was one of them. I never have any fear, however, of the people who love my predecessor; but I always fear the soreheads that have given him trouble. If they loved him I have always found that they soon learned to love me.

Church Street Church was the first appointment in the conference and it had been served by its leading preachers. Some years before that Rev. E. E. Hoss was its popular pastor. He had gone from it to the Pacific Coast. After him Dr. W. G. E. Cunnyngham had filled the appointment with great acceptability, and then Dr. J. S. Burnett.

I was less than thirty years of age and had only been in the conference four years. Beside that, the other leading congregations were supplied with the strongest men in their denominations. The First Methodist Episcopal Church, near me, had Rev. N. G. Taylor, D. D., father of Governor Bob Taylor, as its pastor. He was a man of age and experience and one of the most eloquent of East Tennessee's orators. In early life he had been a distinguished lawyer and a very popular politician. He had served a term or two in Congress. Dr. James Parks, the nestor of the Presbyterian pulpit, was at the First Presbyterian Church; Dr. Sturgis, a very popular pastor, was at the Second Presbyterian Church; and Dr. C. H. Strickland, one of the eminent ministers of his denomination,



was at the First Baptist Church. These are a few of the several high-class men whose churches were within a stone's throw of Church Street Church.

The congregation was an old and cultured one, made up of many of the leading citizens of that city of churches and schools. A large number of professional men, doctors and lawyers and schoolmen were my parishioners. The University of Tennessee was located there, and it was manned by teachers of great ability. The thought appalled me that I was to be their pastor.

I had only had one station, and had no experience in city life and customs. I was a man of the country, yet I was suddenly dropped down in that leading city Church. That was certainly one time when I was sent to an appointment against my will, and one concerning which I had never had a dream. So far as I was concerned it was purely Providential. I had a feeling of helplessness, and was never driven with such a deep sense of need into the presence of God. If a man ever required divine assistance I was the man and that was the time. I felt that I was adapted to Abingdon and had my heart bent on returning to it and its people, but my plans were sadly disrupted. But why should a Methodist preacher ever have plans about an appointment?

The very next Sunday I was on the ground and in the pulpit, and the very first pass out of the box I produced a very unfavorable impression. A full house greeted me and I presume had some sort of expectation, as not one of them had ever heard me try to preach. I stood before them with an open manuscript and read every word of it without taking my eyes off of it, or without moving my hands except to turn the leaves of each page as I finished it. It gave them a shock, for they wanted a preacher, not a manuscript reader.

Within the next half hour I received more advice and suggestion than any young preacher of my age in Tennessee. Well, I was satisfied with the result. I had taken the curiosity out of them, and the next Sunday they expressed themselves delighted. I started them down at the bottom and it was not much trouble after that to gradually lift them back to a sane altitude. I plunged into my pastoral work every afternoon and literally visited "from house to house", but my forenoons I devoted to some of the closest application of my life. It was a matter of necessity in order to meet the demands upon me and compete with those other pulpits.

At one of my night services not long after my start in the city I delivered a terrific sermon on the liquor traffic, and there happened to be present on the occasion a leading wholesale dealer and from the word go the "trade" had it in for me. I took no back track, rather I lost no opportunity to set the saloons on fire. And I thank God that I have lived to see the day when every saloon in Knoxville has been driven from the confines of the State.

My work was not lost; it helped to introduce the force that in the end destroyed them. It was long after my day there that the end came, but it came with the terror of the judgment. No wonder, for the measure of its iniquity was full. I saw some of the awfulest of its tragedies within the limits of my own congregation that term of service.

A young man, the son of one of my best mothers, was addicted to drink and one night he was murdered on the street by another drinker. It was a sad day in that home when I attended that funeral. Later on one of my young men and the son of one of my University professor members, and he himself a member of my Church, was found in his room dead one morning with a clinched pistol in his hand and a bullet

through his brain. Drink caused the tragedy. It was grief in that home when I tried to speak words of comfort. On the following Sunday when I made that young man's life the subject of a thrilling sermon I awoke the next morning to find myself notorious as a preacher.

On another occasion a good lady member of my Church had a drunken son and one evening he came in crazed from the saloon. She reproved him and he struck her with a stick, fractured her skull and she died almost instantly. When I called to see him at the jail the next morning his anguish of heart was something awful.

Just before my pastorate ended a prominent gentleman and his son, husband and son of one of my prominent families, became involved in a difficulty with a leading man on the street and all three of them died with their boots on inside of five minutes. Liquor inspired the trouble. I conducted the funeral services and saw one grave swallow up both of them.

Can any one censure me for my opposition, lifelong in its sweep, to the licensed liquor traffic?

Knoxville was the old home of the Brownlows. W. G. Brownlow, the man who made the name famous in all that section and throughout the Nation, was dead when I began my ministry there, but I had known him years before that time. His widow and two sons were living and I used to visit them. The Brownlows were Methodists. He was a member of the Holston Conference for some years once, but got into journalism and politics and retired from the regular work. He was one of the most remarkable men of his day. He was a bold, daring and spectacular figure and was never so well pleased as when pulling off some sensational stunt in Church or State. He never had connection with the prosaic or the

monotonous. When in the ministry he made it hot for the Presbyterians and the Baptists in all that country. His controversies with Rev. J. R. Graves and with Rev. Frederick Ross of the Baptist and the Presbyterian Churches will never be forgotten in East Tennessee. He put the sum and substance of those controversies in book form, known as "The Iron Wheel Examined", and the book, now obsolete except when found in a few old libraries, would not be allowed to go through the United States mails under our present postal regulation. There never was such a piece of literature like it put in print, but it settled the contest for Methodism in East Tennessee. He was the bitterest and most abusive man who ever put pen to paper, or who ever mounted a public rostrum.

He was a Whig in politics and he was even more bitter in politics than in religious contests. He and Andy Johnson used to have terrific meetings on the stump, and the like of it was never heard in that country. He and Landon C. Haynes, the most eloquent orator in that mountain country, once met in joint discussion and the result was a panic. They came together in deadly personal encounter, and Brownlow shot Haynes in the hip and he limped the rest of his life.

Old ex-Governor Fayette McMullin of Virginia once told me of a personal difficulty between himself and Brownlow. He said he dropped down into Tennessee at the invitation of James K. Polk to speak at a barbecue near Rogersville, and Brownlow was present and he had a pleasant chat with him. After he went home some one sent him a marked copy of Brownlow's Whig, and in his write-up of the occasion he said McMullin carried his brand on his right hand. That if you would examine his hand you would find his thumb and two forefingers bitten off, and that this had occurred back in his life when he drove wagons from Lynchburg to Bristol; that

one night he was stealing corn through the crack of a crib and got his hand caught in a steel trap.

Well, that was the common report about the old man, but Brownlow's write-up about it made him furious. He went back to Tennessee to a campmeeting to settle with Brownlow; met him one Sunday morning just outside of the gate and felled him with a cane, but when Brownlow arose he had his pistol in his hand and drew a bead on McMullin. The old fellow turned and fled, but the pistol missed fire and that is all that saved his life.

Brownlow became Military Governor of Tennessee at the close of the Civil War, and he was a little severe on returning ex-Confederate soldiers. Some of them he handled without gloves, and upon the heads of others he hung heavy penalties, if eventually they could be apprehended.

One day while seated in his office the cards of Dr. John B. McFerrin and Dr. A. L. P. Green were presented to him by his porter. He looked at the cards and directed the porter to escort them in. As they approached he arose and extended his hand and said: "While the lamp holds out to burn the worst of sinners may return."

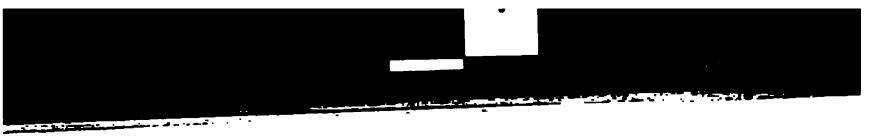
They had refugeed from Tennessee when the Confederate forces evacuated Nashville, and this was the occasion of their first appearance since that eventful day. Brownlow knew them and personally liked them and treated them with every consideration. So his humor expressed itself along with his conviction in the above quotation. I have often heard Dr. McFerrin speak of that meeting with the old Military Governor of Tennessee.

The last time I ever saw Brownlow was toward the close of his term in the United States Senate. He was then old, broken and very much shattered in health. He had had a



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stroke of paralysis and it had left him in a palsied condition. I was in Southwest Virginia and Rev. G. W. Miles, an erstwhile friend of Brownlow, was my Presiding Elder. It was telegraphed one day along the route that Brownlow was on the train bound for Washington and his old friends dropped down to the depot to shake hands with him. In those days he was in the Northern Methodist Church and such had been his bitterness that not many of the Southern Methodist ministers had any use for him. But Brother Miles and myself learned of his presence on the approaching train and we went down to meet him.

As the train slowed up we boarded the sleeper and found him lying in a berth looking like a veritable mummy skeleton. As we approached him he lifted himself up on one elbow and Brother Miles grasped his hand and said: "How are you, Billy; I am sorry to see you looking so well." He was shaking all over and in a highly nervous state, but his rugged humor was equal to the occasion, for he smiled and said: "You are the first Southern Methodist devil who has told me the truth since I left Knoxville. Several have told me to-day that they were sorry to see me looking so feeble, but I knew they were lying."

He presented a pitiable spectacle. His long and lank form was emaciated, his complexion was very dark and muddy, his eyes black and deeply sunken in his head, his nose was prominent, his cavernous mouth occupied the lower part of his long thin face, and his large ears stood out prominently from the sides of his angularly-shaped head. He looked uncanny and unearthly.

He did not live a great while after that, and when he died at his old home in Knoxville his funeral was the most largely attended of any that ever occurred in that city of prominent

men. Despite his bitterness of speech and pen and his many encounters with those with whom he differed, and his severity toward many of his fellow-citizens just after the war, he was in a general way popular among those where he lived. Underneath his rugged and boisterous exterior he really had a tender heart when at his best and did many acts of kindness to his fellowman. But he was a bundle of contradictions and his whole life was one of good and bad impulses alternately mixed. His wife was one of the loveliest old ladies I ever met and she was held in high esteem by a wide circle of friends.

For four years in succession I was sent to Church Street Church until I served out my quadrennium. It was a severe term of service, but one of great value to me. During the time I took a sort of a postgraduate course in the literary department of the State University in connection with my duties as pastor and preacher.

Professor Joiner, a distinguished man in letters, rendered me wonderful assistance in this department of training. He was a master in the realm of English Literature and I lived next door to him and had the benefit of many of his evenings. He took great interest in me and I owe much to his personal influence and supervision as a teacher in the sphere of polite learning.

The duties of that pulpit put great pressure upon me, but it sprung me to my utmost. I did a vast amount of wholesome reading and systematic studying. I had the confidence and co-operation of my people and they gave me the most cordial support. They were an excellent congregation, and among them were some of the noblest families in the city. The Boyds, the McClungs, the Crawfords, the Lyons, the Aults, the Van Gilders, the McClelands, the Gaults, the Woodwards, the Luttrells, and others too numerous to mention, gave

to me as fine a body of people as any man ever preached to.

Sam Crawford, as we called him, was Commandant in the University and a man of royal nature. Henry Ault, sedate and devoted, was as true as the needle to the poles in his devotion to the Church. Matt McClung, big of body and kind of heart, was a strong support. Sam Luttrell, quiet but always at his post of duty. Will Lyons, as clean as a woman and as transparent as sunshine. Matt McCleland, jolly and sincere in word and deed. Dr. John M. Boyd, brainy, wise and attentive. Leon Jourlmon, critical, fastidious, but always dependable. Colonel J. W. Gault, stately, majestic and amiable. But why try to call the roll of such a band? Their names would run into the hundreds. Some of them long ago crossed over the river, but they live in my affections and memory as among the choicest spirits to whom I have ever ministered. But if the men so impressed me with their devotion and kindness, what might I not say for the good women who stood by me in that trying situation? Time would fail me to sketch them in their tenderness and fidelity to me and my family.

Grand old Church Street Church! Will I ever forget her loyalty and her unfailing support? Never; no, never! So unpretentious, so devoted to the history and tradition of the best type of Methodism, generous in her liberality, sparing in her criticisms, indulgent in her tolerance and forbearance, old-fashioned in her views and experience in matters religious, without affectation, appreciative of the old story of the Cross, responsive to every claim, intolerant only of innovations and untried experiments, always jealous of the character of her institutions, anxious to see Zion travail in the spiritual birth of her sons and daughters, and ever hopeful of the ultimate triumphs of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ throughout the world. I have never served a better people and have never had warmer

friends in all the circle of my wide associations. It was with genuine sorrow that the time limit enforced the severance of my delightful relation to them. For the four years I gave them my constant prayer, the unstinted fruits of my best intellectual endeavor and the investment of the sum total of my spiritual capabilities; and the tax had been so severe that my health was considerably impaired and my physical vitality greatly reduced. My nerve-force was practically exhausted. It was well enough for me that the time limit relieved me of the strain.

The night before I left for conference at the close of my last year the good women presented my wife with a costly set of beautiful china, and the Board of Stewards gave to me a handsome gold watch with the inscription on the back case: "A parting gift to Rev. G. C. Rankin from Church Street Church, November 6, 1882." That was thirty years ago and that watch, the token of their love, having worn out one set of works and supplied with a new one, is hanging near my heart to-day to remind me of the good friends of the years long gone.

I have said nothing in this chapter about the three intervening conference sessions because there was nothing of special note in their proceedings, and the Bishops who presided over them were men whom I have already described in former chapters. It so happened that the Holston Conference fell to the lot of the same presiding officers oftener than any conference to which I have ever belonged. This gave me a fine opportunity to see much of Bishops Pierce, McTyeire, Doggett and Wightman. They belonged to the old panel and they were giants in those days. Their coming always excited interest and their work produced deep impressions.

As masters of parliamentary law and as great pulpit and

platform men they stood out in bold relief at a time when the Church needed a few men of transcendent strength and prominence. The impress of their genius was deeply graven in the constitution, the laws and the polity of our reorganized Southern Methodism. They rendered a service only possible to men of masterful intellects and far-reaching statesmanship.

Yes, that old panel of Bishops were Providential men, raised up and called forth by the age and times in which they lived, and they wrought their mighty works in the interest of our Zion.

CHAPTER XIX

Four Eventful Years in Chattanooga

At the close of my last year in Knoxville I attended conference at Asheville. Western North Carolina was still within the bounds of Holston. Bishop A. W. Wilson, one of the new Bishops, presided. He was not new to me, for I had known him well as Missionary Secretary. He had often been through our conference territory in behalf of missions and his fame was spread abroad among us as a great preacher and platform speaker.

He is so well known to my readers that it is almost superfluous for me to sketch him as a preacher and a presiding officer. For years he has been, by common consent, recognized as one of the greatest living preachers in Episcopal Methodism. He has intellectual faculties of the highest order, and to these he has given the most thorough training. In the range of his studies he has moved over the domain of history, philosophy, theology and general literature. There is scarcely any limit to his knowledge of men and of letters.

For a number of years he practiced law and was a distinguished lawyer at the Baltimore bar. He is as familiar with the dead languages almost as he is with the English, and in Church law he is an acknowledged master. His mind moves along great highways of thought, and there is a majesty and a grandeur about his style as a preacher that brings his audi-

ences into awe and reverence when he stands in the pulpit. There is no effort at oratorical display when he speaks; his manner is not very attractive, his voice is neither sweet nor mellow, and his manner of speech is deliberate and measured. He rarely ever makes use of an illustration, and he eschews tropes and similes. He deals in profound thought, and his style and language are in keeping with his greatness of mind as a man and a public speaker.

Bishop Wilson has wonderful resourcefulness. I have heard him scores of times, and in no instance have I ever heard him repeat himself. He is always original and fresh in his pulpit messages to the people. And at times he is superlatively eloquent.

As a presiding officer Bishop Wilson is par excellence. He is a born and a trained parliamentarian. He is as much at home in the chair presiding over a deliberative body as he is in the private circle in friendly converse. His rulings are accepted as final and authoritative. In his dealings with the Cabinet he follows the old lines and gives large latitude to his counselors and advisers. He never deals in favoritisms, creates no bickerings and leaves no afterclaps when the conference session adjourns and he takes his departure.

Personally he is not what you could call a popular man. He is too sincere, too positive and outspoken to put men generally on familiar terms with him. He is rather distant and cool in his relations to men generally. But when once you get close to him and come into touch with his deeper nature, he is kind, considerate and brotherly. But on the surface and in casual contact with him these exquisite traits and qualities do not manifest themselves.

At the close of this Asheville Conference I was stationed at Asheville, the very place suited to my run-down condition.



Its altitude, its healthful breezes, its freedom from malaria, its romantic scenery, its crystal water, all combine to make it one of the health resorts of America. For this reason especially I was delighted to find myself stationed there. And those hospitable people suited me also. But I shall say nothing in this connection about my term of service at Asheville, for I did not remain but that year, and after an interval of four years I was returned to finish out my quadrennium. In a later chapter I will give some account of my Asheville experience.

At the close of the year I attended conference at Chattanooga with no sort of thought but that I would return to my charge of one year. The people desired it and my Presiding Elder had nothing else in view. Bishop McTyeire was the presiding officer. The conference proceedings were drifting along smoothly. Saturday the appointments for Sunday were announced and I was slated to preach the sermon at the ordination of Elders Sunday night. I attached no sort of significance to that arrangement. Sunday morning the Bishop preached one of his deep and severely thoughtful sermons. It was instructive, but heavy and difficult to appropriate. But it was a masterful piece of exposition.

In the afternoon I walked out for an airing and met one of that class of brethren who make it their business to nose into appointments in advance of their announcement and who are always busy finding out where this man and that man and the other man are going to be sent, and who seem to take great delight in reading the mind of the Bishop concerning all such matters. You find them in every conference. They are busybodies, known as conference gossips, and during the session they are plucking you by the sleeve to take you to one side in order to whisper a piece of newly-discovered news into your ear.



MISS HATTIE J. RANKIN

TRAINED CHURCH WORKER



Well, this brother asked me what I knew. I knew nothing and told him so. "Have you not heard the latest?" he said. I was frank to tell him that I had heard nothing at all. Then he volunteered to give me a storehouse of information about what was going on in the Cabinet; and among other things he said that I was slated for Market Street Church, Chattanooga; and that was the explanation of my appointment to preach the ordination sermon that night. The people wanted a chance to hear me before the thing was sealed.

Well, of course that was news to me, and it was very interesting news. And the thing about it was that this brother usually managed to find out with some degree of accuracy about such matters. Just how he did it I could not tell, but he would pick up a little gossip here and a little more there, put things together and get to a plausible conclusion. In this way he and his sort in every conference keep themselves very well posted about the Cabinet work.

Another thing that gave plausibility to the piece of news concerning myself was that I knew he was anxious himself to go to Market Street, for he had told me so some days before; and on this interesting occasion he remarked to me that if I did not want to be pulled up from Asheville and sent to Chattanooga I had better get busy. As a matter of fact, I did not want to be pulled up and moved, more especially on account of my health than otherwise.

So I did get busy, and for the first time in my life called on Bishop McTyeire, a hazardous thing for a young man to do. As I entered his private room I met a committee of the Official Board of Market Street Church coming out and two or three of them spoke very cordially to me, something they had not done before. This within itself was suspicious. Bishop McTyeire, though an apparently stern man, was easily approached.



No one rarely ever changed his mind when once it was made up; nevertheless he would receive you and listen to what you had to say with patience. I did not amble, but stated exactly to him what I had heard and then proceeded to give to him my reasons why I was anxious to return to Asheville. I had laid in my winter's wood, had my feed provided for my horse and cow, and my health was improving. To come to that malarious location in my rundown condition and take charge of that worse rundown Church would finish me, and he had just as well sign my death warrant as to send me to Chattanooga.

These things were not only true as I believed them, but I could speak the more plainly about the change since it was a considerable promotion to come from Asheville, the little mountain town, to Chattanooga, the metropolis of the conference. Had I been contending for something better than I had it would have been different. But I was contending for the small appointment when probably a much more influential one was in contemplation for me.

Bishop McTyeire listened to me kindly and I thought I was making an impression on him until he opened his sleepy-looking eyes and said:

"How is my old friend Brother Sleuder getting on these times at Asheville?"

I told him that ordinarily I would not mind discussing Brother Sleuder with him, but under the circumstances I was not interested in his case in the slightest degree; that I had another object in view in seeking that talk with him. He caught the point and smiled, and then he opened his great mouth and said something:

"It is well enough to have your wood laid by for winter, and to have your cow and horse feed provided. But these

comforts are only a few of the incidents in the life of an itinerant. These can be disposed of to your successor. It is also well enough to look after your health, but a Methodist preacher, like a soldier, is a means to an end. If the Church demands it, a Methodist preacher can even afford to die. Death with him is only a question of time, anyway. He is supposed always to be ready for it. This Church is a post of honor as well as duty. It has done no good for a few years, and I am looking for the man to take hold of it. If it should fall to your lot you ought to rejoice and feel honored. So just compose yourself and I will take care of you and the Church, too. Now go in peace and make yourself an obedient son in the gospel."

I made haste to depart, for I knew what that old Bishop meant by that talk. I have often wondered how under the sun I ever mustered up courage to go to his room and have that talk with him. It was monumental cheek on my part, and it was as fruitless of favorable results as it was monumental.

The next night I was read out to Market Street Church, Chattanooga, and at the close of the proceedings Bishop McTyeire took me by the hand cordially and said:

"I have put you here on purpose. Take hold of things with a strong grip, sell this old property, buy a lot on the hill and build a house creditable to Southern Methodism. I will remember you in my prayers, and may the good Lord give you wisdom and strength to accomplish wonderful things in the midst of these great possibilities."

This last talk gave me a warm feeling for that great man, but the other one impressed me otherwise. The Church has never had but one Bishop McTyeire.

Market Street Church was located on a fine business corner, but it was a dingy old brick structure, out of date and un-

attractive. It had more than two hundred members, most of whom were women and children. The Sunday-school was small and there was no evidence of enterprise or Church pride. While the conference was in session it still owed its pastor three hundred dollars on his salary; its old parsonage was burned down and a rented house had to be provided.

Besides this, Chattanooga was a cosmopolitan city, overgrown, crude, wicked and a mixture of Southern and Northern people—a sort of mongrel population bent more on trying to make money than to build up moral sentiment or developing Church interests.

It was full of dirty saloons and dives, and its wickedness was bold and aggressive. True, there were good people among them, and quite a number of them were in that Church; but to me it was a forbidding outlook.

I reached the city Tuesday after the next Sunday, and the daily papers announced my arrival and that I would conduct prayer service Wednesday night. There were six people at the service and I had to pray twice in order to be able to call it a prayer-meeting. And it was a bright, pleasant night, too.

I put in a few days studying the situation, and then called my board together for a council of war. Several of them were stanch business men, and they promised me their support and co-operation. The next Sunday the house was two-thirds full, and not so many at night.

I put in a few weeks looking over the field and taking an inventory of the assets and liabilities, and then proceeded to form, in my own mind, my plans of operation. It was necessary to dispose of that property and secure an eligible site for a new church. The other congregations, especially the Presbyterians and Northern Methodists, had handsome structures under way. So it was not long until we had gotten an

option on the lot we wanted, then we quietly got some real estate agents at work.

As the year advanced we sold the old property for thirty-six thousand dollars and closed the deal for the new lot for five thousand dollars. Architects soon had plans for the new church and the work of building was not long in taking shape. It required nearly two years to complete the building, and for the time being we worshiped in the old structure. In the meantime we rebuilt the parsonage and had a comfortable place to live in. The enterprise thus inaugurated put new life into my people and my work began to look like something.

In the late spring I made an effort to get the ministers of the city to join me in an invitation to get Sam Jones to visit Chattanooga and hold a meeting for us. The city needed just such a shaking up as he was qualified to give to it, but not one of them would countenance the movement. Jones had then been in Memphis and Knoxville and stirred the natives, and our preachers were afraid to risk him in Chattanooga.

So I assumed all responsibility and extended him the invitation. He readily accepted, for he was not the popular evangelist that he afterward became. There was much criticism and murmuring because I had arranged for him to come. There was some of it in my own congregation. But the bulk of them were with me. Our old Church was the only place we had for him. The daily papers, especially the Times, intimated what it would do for him if he made the same attacks on Chattanooga society that he had done at other places. All this gave him wide advertisement.

So when he came the face of the earth tried to get into that dingy old house. For two hundred feet around it the space was packed an hour before the night service was ready to begin. I had tried to have a choir in readiness, but I never

saw one of them in place that night. They had waited too long and there was no room for them. I took Sam Jones through a window from the rear. A hush fell on the congregation as he asked us to sing something. I started a hymn and got it too high. Nobody joined me. I tried it again and got it too low, with the same result. He turned to me and said:

"You can stop that music. I can take two free niggers down in Georgia and beat all such singing."

The audience roared. They had come out to hear just such as that and they enjoyed it. He then called them to prayer and I never heard a sweeter prayer. He then looked down at the string of reporters just under him in the altar and said:

"My, Lord! Am I to be nibbled to death by these tadpoles? I understand that you are going to show me up. You are! Where did you chaps spend last night? Where do you spend the most of your nights? I know! Now you open up on me. I will preach here at six in the morning, at eleven in the day, at three to-morrow afternoon and again to-morrow night. You'll get one shot a day at me, but I will get four at you and every time I fire you'll hit the ground running. Now do your best, boys, and we'll have some fun in Chattanooga while this meeting goes on, if we do not have anything else."

Then he preached a very telling sermon. He went back to the parsonage with me, for no one volunteered to entertain him.

At six the next morning the house was crowded, and so it was at the other services. The altar was crowded also with penitents. The preachers then began to run over each other to get into the meeting, throwing open their houses for after-services. Everybody wanted to entertain him. The meeting increased each hour in interest until it swept the city like a tidal wave. It was deep, strong, irresistible, wonderful. It lasted ten days, and the three Sundays following I received into

my Church one hundred and forty-eight members, nearly all of whom were young men and middle-aged men. The other congregations were likewise blessed.

It was the first great revival that the city had known. It put Church work and religion twenty years in advance of what it was at the beginning. It practically revolutionized the moral and religious status of Chattanooga. It was one of the most effective meetings that Sam Jones ever held. The newspapers treated him royally. They put his sermons into the Associated Press dispatches and sent them to the great dailies of the country. From that moment Sam Jones was great in the esteem of the public, in the pulpit and on the platform.

My Church work received a great impetus. Some of the strongest men in the city came into my membership, and from that day till the present they have been the bone and sinew of Chattanooga Methodism. The church building went forward rapidly, and one day when it was nearly completed Sam Jones was passing through the city and stopped with me. As we walked by the new building—a splendid structure it was—he asked me who was going to dedicate it? I told him we had not agreed on a man yet, but I guessed one of the Bishops.

"Yes," he said; "when you have a dirty job like that meeting you wanted me to hold Sam Jones is all right. But when you have a nice job like this you want a Bishop!"

A few nights after that my board met and I took up the question of selecting the preacher to conduct the dedicatory service, and with one voice they wanted Sam Jones! I knew that it was a mistake, but the most of them were converts in his late meeting and I could not well oppose them. They agreed on Sam Jones. But I prepared to cover the retreat by getting them to invite Dr. J. B. McFerrin and Dr. O. P. Fitzgerald to be present and take charge of the dedicatory

service after the sermon, and they agreed to it. It looked like putting those two distinguished men to a poor use, but it was the best I could do.

The day and the occasion came round. A great congregation filled the splendid structure. It was a thing of beauty, large, commodious, out of debt and handsomely furnished. Sam Jones was on hand. So were the two leading men already mentioned. I had my fears of what he would do and say. He took his text: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." For ten minutes it was touchingly beautiful. Then he paused and looked round at the auditorium. No one knew what was coming next.

"You fellows think that I am here to say nice things about you for building this church, do you? Well, if you do you have got the wrong sow by the yer!"

I knew we were gone. He looked down at the circle of the Official Board as they sat round the altar.

"What do you fellows pay your preacher?"

Not one of them chirped.

"What do you pay him, Tom Snow? What is it, John Martin?"

The last named saw that an answer must come, and he said: "Twelve hundred dollars."

Jones groaned until you could have heard him a block.

"A seventy-thousand-dollar Church and a twelve-hundred-dollars preacher! My, what a spectacle! Well, I know that's all Rankin's worth; but you ought to give the poor fellow something. The few days I spent at his house in the beginning of that meeting the Lord knows I'd been glad if somebody had sent something round there."

And thus he continued to the end of his harangue. I was



MISS LOUIE BOYD RANKIN
PIANIST

never so crestfallen. The whole audience became hilarious at my expense. I was relieved when he took his seat.

Dr. Fitzgerald came forward, and the dignity of the service recovered itself. He made a beautiful talk. Dr. McFerrin took charge and delivered one of his inimitable addresses. He spoke of the time that he was a chaplain on the battlefield of Chickamauga, the last Sunday that he was in that vicinity; and he related one of the most touching incidents I ever heard about how he walked over the battlefield trying to comfort the dying; how he found a handsome young fellow in gray with his life-blood ebbing away, and how he recognized in him the son of one of his old Alabama friends; how the young man told him to feel in his pocket and get out his Testament; how he found his mother's name in it. As he prayed with him a young fellow near by called out to him and said that he had his mother's Testament, too. He turned and it was a boy in blue. As the old Doctor told how he knelt there holding each young fellow's hand as he prayed for them, and finally how the death struggle was soon over with both of them, it broke the whole congregation into tears. The application he made of the incident was telling. Then he read the dedicatory service, and the day was saved!

Was I correct in my estimate of Sam Jones' performance? No! He knew what he was doing. The next day a wagon drove up to the parsonage and left flour, lard, meat, sugar, coffee and the like, enough to last us nearly the rest of the year. And Monday night the stewards met and increased my salary to eighteen hundred dollars! Did myself and wife forgive Sam for that reference to us? Well, we will let you answer that question.

Great, big-hearted Sam Jones! Only the books of the Judgment will fully disclose the extent of the good he did in his

own peculiar way. God had a work for him to do, and right well did he do it before he went hence. Let the world criticise him as it may, but the Lamb's Book of Life has more to his credit than almost any score of those who wrought by his side in the Master's vineyard. He was himself and nobody else; and let his work testify as to whether he was blessed of God in his unique ministry.

The saloons of Chattanooga were intolerable, and I determined to make an aggressive warfare on them. They were fearful in their influence on the working classes and on the young men of the city. I prepared myself to speak with some authority concerning them. So I quietly spent two nights in them making an investigation of them. I did not assume much disguise in this method of inquiry. It was not necessary, especially in the working districts of the city. They lived such an exclusive life of their own that nowhere did they recognize me, except the latter part of the last night when I visited the more prominent places in the business districts. I did not spend a very great time in either place; just remained long enough to see the character and number of patrons in them and their manner of life and conduct. In this way I gathered a great deal of first-hand information, and I was ready to speak, not from hearsay, but from personal observation. When in a few of them I was recognized, my presence created a panic.

After this tour of inspection I announced through the papers that I would preach a series of sermons each Sunday night for some weeks on "Two Nights in the Barrooms and What I Saw". The announcement created a sensation, and during the winter Sunday nights of 1886-87 my congrgations were limited to the size and capacity of my auditorium. The Daily Times published each sermon in their Monday morning issue

until I had completed the series. There were twenty-four of them, and they were red-hot from start to finish. A number of the papers, weekly as well as daily, reproduced them; and they had much to do with the Legislature's submitting the question of a prohibition State-wide amendment to a vote of the people in September, 1887.

Twelve of these sermons were published in pamphlet form and more than fifteen thousand copies of it were scattered broadcast over the State. It brought me into much prominence, and necessarily made me a striking figure in the campaign that followed. For three months I gave myself up almost exclusively to campaigning for the adoption of the amendment, and I became the target for the abuse and vilification of the liquor papers and their stump speakers.

The Chattanooga Times was especially villainous in its attacks upon me, and left nothing unsaid that would counteract my influence against the saloon. The libel laws of Tennessee are very liberal in the latitude accorded to newspapers, and their assaults upon me were terrific. They strove to put me in every false light possible, and my only recourse was to get back at them through circulars and on the platform.

I remember a particularly false and vicious attack of the Times on me toward the close of the campaign, and I announced through circulars that I would reply on Saturday night at the temperance wigwam on the courthouse square. There must have been four or five thousands people present and I doubt if the Chattanooga Times will ever forget the excoriation it received on that occasion. The editor, with two stenographers, was present and took down every word I spoke, but not one line of it ever appeared in the columns of that prurient whiskey organ.

I had one very amusing joint discussion during the progress

of that campaign. I had many of them, but this one was peculiarly interesting. It happened on Walden's Ridge, about eighteen miles from Chattanooga. Captain J. C. Hutcheson, of Houston, Texas, had a summer residence out there, and after the prohibition campaign in Texas that same year was over he and his family went to their Walden Ridge summer home for their vacation.

I knew nothing of him at that time, and he had never heard tell of me. He had taken quite an active part in the campaign in Texas and the antis had won by ninety-two thousand majority. He was flushed with the victory, and the antis on the ridge got him to make a speech for them on the subject and tell how they had snowed the fanaticism under in Texas. He made the appointment in a large house on a week night and challenged any pro to meet him. An old man jumped on a flea-bitten gray and galloped over the city to get me to meet the Texas Goliath.

Of course I was ready for that sort of a tilt. When the time came I was on the ground, and after dark the Captain and his family drove up. I was introduced to him and he received me with a very patronizing and gracious manner. He made the terms; he would speak an hour, give me an hour to reply and he would take twenty minutes to make his rejoinder. It was satisfactory and we went into the house. I knew the crowd, and three-fourths of them were pros. He evidently took me for a greenhorn out in that mountain section. He spent a good deal of his hour crowing over their great Texas victory, and how they had buried prohibition so deep that it would never again hear the resurrection trumpet; that they were done with it forever. And he told them how to dispose of it in a similar way in Tennessee. He left down

a number of glaring gaps and made himself the most vulnerable man I ever tackled in a joint discussion.

When I arose to reply he saw for the first time that the crowd was against him. I determined to have a little fun at his expense. I stated that the gentleman had spent the most of his hour bragging about what he had done to help overwhelm prohibition in Texas, but when it was remembered that every man in Tennessee for the last fifty years who had done something which made it necessary for him to leave the State for the public good, had gone to Texas, and that all such men from other States had found it necessary to do likewise; that nobody was the least surprised that the majority against prohibition in Texas was only ninety-two thousand. The only surprise to people who knew the facts was that it had not been twice that much. But Tennessee was not Texas. Then I threw down the challenge to him to tell the audience whether or not he was a native Texan. He sat there perfectly dumb. The audience shouted:

"Make him tell; make him tell!"

Finally he rose and said:

"I was born in Virginia."

After the crowd got through shouting I said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the Captain himself says that he is not a native Texan. Now I do not know why he left Virginia for Texas, but I know why pople leave Tennessee for Texas—it is for the good of Tennessee! Therefore is he not a nice specimen to come all the way from the cow pastures of Texas to teach Tennesseans their duty on moral questions? Why, he ought to write the Governor of Virginia and request him to suspend all writs temporarily against fugitives from that State, so as to permit him to return to his native heath



Capt. Hutcheson and Myself in Joint Discussion.

and teach his new moral code to the State from whose confines he moved a few years ago!"

The audience went wild, and from that time to the close I had things my own way.

When the Captain arose to reply he was actually angry and used a mild cuss word, and then an old lady back in the audience sprang to her feet and shouted:

"May the good Lord send a thunderbolt this moment to kill such a wretch on the spot!"

That practically broke up the meeting. A few years after that I was sent to Houston, Texas, as pastor of Shearn Memorial Church, and I saw from the papers that Captain Hutcheson was a candidate for Congress from that district.

One day Rev. John E. Green and myself were standing on the street corner and a gentleman came up and spoke to him and shook hands with me also—just like all candidates usually do. I recognized him, but he did not recognize me, but remarked that my face was familiar. Green said:

"Captain Hutcheson, excuse me, this is Dr. Rankin, our new pastor at Shearn Church."

A quizzical look came to his face and he said:

"Yes, I know him; and what have you done, sir, that you, too, have come to Texas?"

The laugh was mutual, and we became fast friends.

Prohibition in Tennessee was defeated by twenty-five thousand majority, but throughout East Tennessee, the section for which I became responsible, it went pro by a good majority. But the work was not lost, neither was the cause. We sowed the seed and the harvest was gathered several years later, and now Tennessee is a prohibition State.

I was worn out when the contest was over and I had only a few weeks in which to finish up my work for conference—the

end of my quadrennium. This I did and when the end of the year came I was ready to render a good account.

I had had four of the hardest years of my life in that city by the river, but my work was a vindication of what I had done. There stood that handsome new building, with a membership of over six hundred; it was paid out of debt, the Sunday-school was quadrupled, the new parsonage was free of obligation, the salary of the preacher had been practically doubled, and Centenary Church was one of the dominant forces in the city, and the first Church in the conference.

Two or three days before I left for conference I went in home one day and to my surprise I found Bishop McTyeire stretched out on the lounge in the parlor. He grasped my hand and said:

"Well, you are not dead! You look like a man very much alive, and yet you thought you would certainly die if I took you up from Asheville and put you down here. I have just been round to the church, and I see that you have done what I told you to do. And you have done it well. Don't you see that a preacher does not always know what is best for him and his work? You have made yourself by coming to Chattanooga."

I had made many friends in that city. Two-thirds of its members had been taken into the Church under my ministry. They were greatly attached to me, for notwithstanding the strenuous life I had led, and had led them as well, they never flickered in their support of me. They stood by me amid all the attacks of the liquor demon and cheered me in every blow I delivered upon his fiendish head. But it had been war to the knife and the knife to the hilt.

When the time came to dissolve my relation with them, notwithstanding my attachment for them, I felt that my work was

done and I was ready for the change. I had been in war until I actually wanted a season of peace. I felt like I had won an honorable furlough, and I was ready to stack arms for the time being and get away from the smell of gunpowder.

CHAPTER XX

Four Years in Ashville, and More

While I was ready to change from Chattanooga, yet I had a great deal of anxiety about who would succeed me in the pastorate of Centenary Church. I had devoted four of the best years of my life to it; I had seen every piece of material go into its structure from the foundation to its finial; I had received the most of its members into its communion; I had baptized many of them and felt toward them all a little like a father feels toward his children, and for the life of me I did not see how it was possible for the right man to be found to take my place as their pastor!

I had literally built myself into their life, and I had built their life into mine. They had become a part of me. But the conference came along and sent me to another charge and put Dr. J. P. McFerrin in my stead.

Two years afterward I had occasion to visit my old Church, and I was not long in finding out that they were getting along even better than when I was their pastor! Then I sought to comfort myself with the thought that I had done my work while there so thoroughly that most any man could follow me and succeed.

At least I learned that no one man is indispensable to the success of the kingdom of Christ, and that it is a waste of time for one preacher to grieve over the fate of his successor. The Church will take care of that feature of the work.

During my quadrennium at Chattanooga Bishop J. C. Keener held one session of our conference, and I had the pleasure of his company in my home. He was somewhat different from any of the other Bishops I have described, both as a preacher and a presiding officer. He was well developed physically; had a large frame, a florid complexion, light hair, a smoothly-chiseled face of classic mold, a fine head and a massive form.

He had all the marks of greatness. His training had been excellent, his experience varied, and his natural endowments original and lofty. He was possessed of a dreamy and a poetic temperament and lived a good deal in the realm of the ideal. He was not a practical man like Bishop McTyeire, but he was just as great in his own way. He was more entertaining and vivacious in his conversation and preaching. There was a well-defined strain of genius in him, and occasionally he was sparkling and refulgent in the pulpit.

In some of his public prayers he was a marvel. He was not always the same in the pulpit. Often he would reach altitudes of thought in the sweep of his imagination and dream dreams and see visions that he was unable to make plain to his auditors; and at times it was like trying to grasp the colors of the rainbow for the average listener to follow him and clearly perceive his conceptions of thought.

He towered amid spiritual realms too ethereal and sublimated for ordinary mortals. But this was only occasional. For the most part his sermons were as beautiful and inspiring as prose poems. I heard him preach a few of this sort and I have never heard them surpassed.

As a Bishop he was replete with variety, and he often gave zest and brightness to the proceedings of the conference sessions. There was nothing dull or routine in his manner of presiding; and in the Cabinet, while pleasant and brotherly,



he usually determined matters to suit himself. But he was so good-natured and masterful that no one seriously objected to the finality of his actions.

In the private circle he was one of the most delightful men I ever met. He loved children and flowers and music, and the companionship of congenial friends was his delight.

Bishop McTyeire held the session of the conference the last year I was at Chattanooga, and it met at Abingdon. It was my good fortune to be entertained at the good home of Victor Litchfield with him. He was then in the full maturity of his great powers; in fact, he was just over the hill in the turn of his life. He came into my room on Sunday morning only partly dressed and had his Bible in his hands and remarked:

"I have just finished reading Paul's great exposition of the doctrine of the resurrection, and it is grand beyond description. What a revelation the apostle had of the glory of the resurrection body! This chapter is the greatest that Paul ever penned. As I find myself traveling toward the sunset these words contain meanings for me of which I never dreamed in my younger ministry."

And thus for half an hour I listened to a most instructive exposition of the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. When he was through I remarked to him that some years previous in the volume of sermons known as "The Methodist Pulpit, South", I had read his sermon on the "Intermediate State", and that I had often wondered if in his maturer years and closer study he had found it necessary to change his views on that subject. He shook his head and said:

"No! On the contrary, I am more firmly convinced of the truthfulness of the position taken in that discourse now than when I first prepared it!"

On Monday morning I picked up the Daily Tribune, published at Knoxville, and read the account of the Emma Abbott episode at McKendree Church, Nashville, the day before when young Dr. W. A. Candler preached his famous sermon on "The Evils of the Modern Theater", and called the Bishop's attention to it. He remarked:

"My, what an advertising stroke for her! Her performance will be in every paper in America, and they will laud her beyond the sky for her reply to the preacher. But it was an unpardonable violation of the proprieties of the Church service. However, she is a woman and that fact will obscure her irreverence. Mark what I say! Some Nashville preacher will be in the papers in twenty-four hours defending her course."

And his prediction came true. At the close of that session he was kind enough to send me back to Asheville to finish up the quadrennium which I had only begun four years before, when he broke into it by sending me to Chattanooga at the end of my first year. To me this was gratifying. It took me back there with a richer experience and with better qualifications for continuous work.

In many respects this was one of the most pleasant charges of my ministry. It was a congregation of intelligent people, cultivated and refined, and genuinely Methodistic in their training and customs. They had a great deal of wealth among them, and by this time they were liberal and possessed a good Church spirit. There were responsibilities enough to keep a pastor alert and active, yet there were no such responsibilities as had taxed me in two city charges preceding this one.

It was an easy charge; the competition was not great and Methodism had the right of way in the community. The pastoral work was not difficult, and the pulpit work was sufficiently inspiring to prompt one to his best effort. But they



were good people to preach to; attentive, appreciative and the most hospitable people I ever served. It was whole-souled, unstinted, mountain hospitality. They ministered to the comfort of the parsonage family with full hands and overflowing hearts. It was a positive luxury to minister to them. And there was a good field for evangelistic work also.

Rev. James Atkins, Jr., was one of my parishioners. He was President of Asheville Female College, and he was brotherly, helpful and cordial. He was a man of keen intellect, broad culture, extensive reading; and to be associated with him was an inspiration.

I had in my congregation a very remarkable man, a local preacher. His name was Rev. M. L. Pease. He had been a member of one of the New York Conferences, but he founded the Five Points Mission in New York, and took a local relation to devote himself to that sort of work. But his health gave way and he moved to Asheville and made it his home.

He was a great Sunday-school man, and for years he was the Superintendent. He was a Yankee and knew how to make money, but he was liberal with it, and he loved the Church. He founded a mission school in his home for poor mountain girls, and in this way rendered a valuable service to humanity. If among them now and then he found one specially gifted, he would send her to Vassar or some other great school and give to her a very finished education.

He had his own peculiar ideas and was a little cranky, but his heart was always in the right place, and I found him a most useful man. But I had to humor his whims and pander to his harmless vanity. He was a severe critic and very free with his suggestions. You could tolerate this in him because he was always ready to lead in any Church enterprise.

I want to mention one illustration of his good work among

needy girls. It is characteristic of him. There appeared in the Southern Christian Advocate, which was then published in Macon, Georgia, a written account of a girl back in the mountains of North Georgia striving to educate herself. She was the daughter of one of the local preachers at Cottaca. The writer gave a sketch of her. Her Christian name was "Estalena". It was given to her by the Indians. They came from the Government Reservation near by her father's house when she was a little baby, and she was so fair and beautiful that they would point to her and say, "Estalena"; and in the Indian vernacular it meant "Beautiful Lily'. It was such an appropriate name that the parents gave it to her in baptism. She grew up and had such advantages as her father could give to her in a small school taught by himself until she was seventeen years of age, and then she secured a little subscription school back in the mountains and taught to make a little money to go to school again.

The circuit preacher held service in her schoolhouse one week day and became favorably impressed with her; found that she was very religious and that she opened her school every morning with a Bible reading and prayer. He found out all the above facts about her and wrote them up for the Southern Christian Advocate. That copy of the paper fell into Brother Pease's hand and he at once wrote and got into communication with her.

To make a long story short, she was soon in his school, went through his course, and he sent her to Vassar and she became a most accomplished young woman; and after that was the honored wife of one of our leading ministers.

Many of my readers have heard the noted evangelist, George R. Stuart, use her as an illustration in one of his greatest sermons, showing how Christ, though rich, for our sakes be-

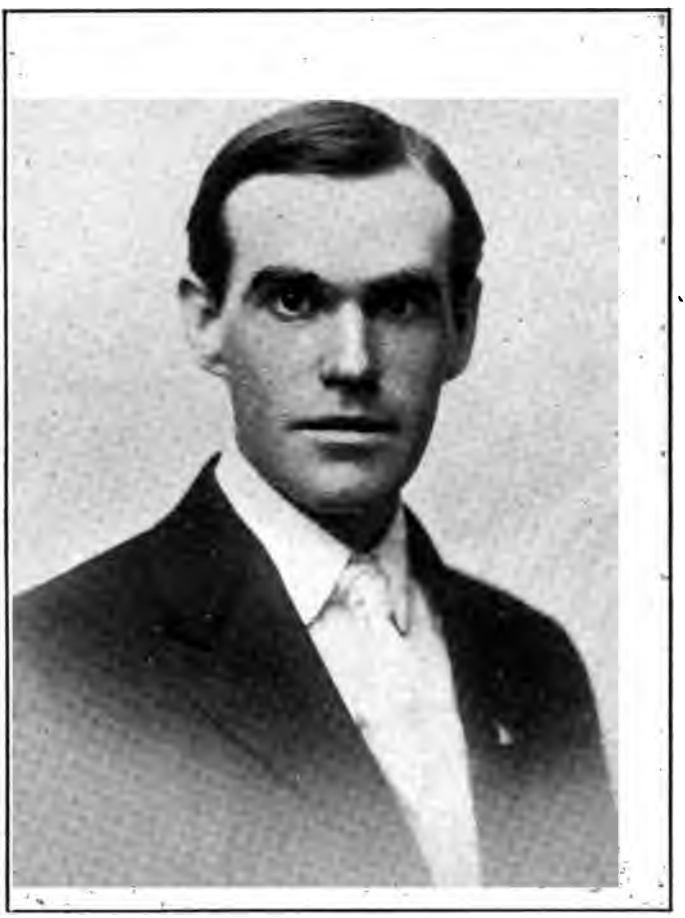
came poor and adapted himself to our lowest conditions that he might save us. He then showed how this lovely girl, having been through this great college, her country folk imagined that she would be above them now, in her high estate; but instead of that she knew better than ever how to make herself one of them, and gave her beautiful life to the good of others. That was this lovely girl, Estalena Robinson.

Dear old Brother Pease has long been in his heavenly home, and there were those there by the score to receive him into everlasting habitations.

Asheville rapidly became a health resort. People of pulmonary trouble from the North and the Northwest flocked there in the winter season, and in the summer-time great numbers from the heated South found those breezes refreshing. This made the town noted, and it was always filled with great crowds of visitors the year round. It increased the labor of the pastors, for many of these sick and dying people needed the consolations of the gospel; and it gave to me a wide acquaintance with leading people from all sections of the country. Many prominent ministers were among them.

One summer the Rev. George Waverly Briggs, then editor of the Texas Christian Advocate, was one of the visitors, and I met him for the first time. I had him to preach one Sunday, and his sermon carried the people beyond themselves. There was such a demand to hear him again that I prevailed upon him to preach once more. This time it was well advertised and the house was packed to its capacity and expectation ran high.

He was an exceedingly handsome man, and one of the most gifted in the Church. His sermon was on the Prodigal Son, and it was a gem. His delivery was perfect, his presence commanding, and I have never seen a congregation more be-



GEO. C. RANKIN JR.

OUR ONLY SON



witched. No wonder, for it was the perfection of oratory and eloquence.

Apparently his future was pregnant with promise, and it seemed that anything within the gift of the Church was within his reach. His endowment was princely, his genius transcendent, and had his consecration equaled his splendid gifts, to what promotion might he not have aspired!

But, alas, alas! I always feel like shedding tears whenever I think of George Waverly Briggs and the ill-fated shadow that fell upon his brilliant promise. Yet he is more to be pitied than condemned.

Noble in nature, gifted in intellect, refulgent in genius; nevertheless he was weak in will-power, and in an evil moment the serpent of the cup beguiled him; and, like a blazing meteor sweeping through the heavens, his glorious light went down into the appalling gloom of a starless night with no hope of a coming morning.

I met that inimitable statesman, Senator Zebulon Vance, the most gifted son of the old North State. He was a noted man in the National galaxy and conspicuous in the United States Senate. He was the most original and unique politician of his day, and he belonged to that class of East Tennessee politicians already described. He had been a prominent General in the Confederate army, had twice been Governor of the State, and was then one of the Senators from North Carolina.

He was a very large man, weighing nearly three hundred pounds. He had a heavy countenance and looked like a man without humor. He rarely ever smiled either in conversation or on the rostrum, yet he was the most witty and humorous man I ever heard talk or speak. No man could stand before him on the hustings. Whatever he wanted his constituents

were ready to give it to him. They denied him nothing. I used to hear him at his best before his "Buncombe" audiences and the effect was positively indescribable. He handled them like a storm handles the ocean.

As an illustration of his style I will give one incident. I was in Baltimore in 1884 at the Centennial of Episcopal Methodism, and during that session the local Democracy gave a tariff banquet to leading members of Congress. It occurred at the Academy of Music. Among those present were Allen G. Thurman, Daniel W. Voorhees, Samuel J. Randall, John G. Carlisle, Zebulon Vance and many others.

The spectators sat in the balconies and heard the speeches. The tariff question was new then to the masses; it was just becoming an issue. The toastmaster introduced each speaker, and some of them were eloquent; but no enthusiasm had been produced. It came Senator Vance's turn, and he was introduced as the distinguished gentleman from "Buncombe".

He began: "I have listened with much interest to these eloquent gentlemen as they have spoken upon the tariff, but for the life of me I have not learned anything much. They do not seem to understand the subject. I have never heard but one man talk on the subject who did understand it. He was one of my old 'Buncombe' constituents. I made a speech up there some time ago on the tariff and I guess I was as about as clear on it as these great men to-night. As I left the door of the courthouse two of my constituents were discussing my speech. One of them said: 'Smith, did Zeb make that thar taarif clere to you?' Said Smith: 'No, he didn't. But I knowed all about it afore he spoke.' 'Well, what is it?' Smith said: 'Why, taarif means that goods has riz.'"

That stroke of humor brought down the house, and the more

you think about it the more you are convinced that the "Buncombe" definition of tariff is about complete.

While in Asheville I had another fight with the saloons. The only ones in the county were in that city. They were mean and degraded, as saloons always are. There is not a good one on the face of the earth. We brought on an election and it was a warm one. The campaign waxed hot and hotter, but the so-called "business men" threw their influence toward the antis on business principles, and we were defeated by a small majority. Some years after that they voted the saloons out, and since then the State swept them out by a constitutional amendment.

During my first year in my second term at Asheville I was fortunate in having for my associate minister Rev. C. M. Bishop, fresh from Emory and Henry College. He was a scholarly and a dignified young preacher; cultured, refined and self-possessed. As the year advanced he became quite attentive to one of my young lady members; really she looked more like a girl than a young lady. Some of my more sedate and elderly members thought he was carrying on a flirtation with her and began to take notice of it. Especially Brother Pease took this view of it. At our Sunday-school picnic Brother Bishop and the young lady were quite devoted, and two of these elderly gentlemen suggested that I call the young minister's attention to what they regarded as a little out of place and undignified in his fondness for this particular girl, as they styled her. I was loath to meddle in an affair of that sort and protested, but they were quite insistent. That was Saturday, and I took the suggestion under advisement.

Monday following I was seated in my home and Brother Bishop approached up the sidewalk. That was my opportunity and I prepared to mention the matter to him. After he was

seated alone with me, and before I had time to work up to the unpleasant duty, he spoke to me in a sort of confidential way and asked me if I would be at home on next Thursday evening. I answered in the affirmative, and he told me that he and Miss Phoeby Jones were to be married on that evening and he wanted me to perform the ceremony! You could have knocked me down with a feather. She looked so much like a girl I hardly thought of her as a woman, but it relieved me of my embarrassment.

At the appointed time I officiated at their marriage, and a happy marriage it proved for both of them. She was the woman he needed as a minister, and he was the man suited to her; and their wedded lives have been singularly blessed of God.

I had good success during all my years at Asheville, and my health and strength wonderfully improved. Everything was congenial and there was not one unpleasant jar in my relation as pastor and preacher. The people were apparently well pleased and I was most assuredly devoted to them. I had one of the best and most capable Board of Stewards in the whole of my pastorates, and they attended to business punctually and systematically.

Henry Pendland was my Treasurer, and I have never seen him excelled. He handed my check to me every Monday morning as regularly as clockwork, and his fellowship was truly royal.

The last conference session I attended at Holston was at Morristown, eighty miles below Asheville, and at a point where the North Carolina Railroad intersected the trunk line leading to Knoxville. It was an ideal place to hold a conference, for it was about an equal distance from all points of the territory.

It was at this session that I was elected a delegate to the

General Conference to meet the following May in St. Louis, Missouri. This was an honor that I appreciated and one I did not expect.

I encountered my first and only woman scrape at this conference, and it gave me the fright of my life. We had an ugly case of discipline, and Rev. Frank Richardson and myself defended the accused minister. I was stopping at the hotel and the trial took place each night at the courthouse, a half mile away. I was rooming with a minister upstairs, midway the building. The trial concluded Sunday morning about half past one o'clock. We determined to finish it and be done with it. It was an ugly affair. Our line of defense was that it was a conspiracy upon the part of the woman in the case with designing persons to ruin the minister. But the committee found him guilty and expelled him from the ministry and membership of the Church.

As I left the courthouse and walked down the street toward the hotel I was in a deep, brown study and became unconscious of where I was or where I was going. The thought uppermost in my mind was that if this man was innocent and thus ruined by wicked persons, whose character was safe? I walked on automatically until all at once I found myself at the door of my room. It was locked and then I realized where I was. As I stood there knocking a woman across the hall and two or three rooms beyond put her head out at the door and said: "Mr. Rankin, come to this room." It paralyzed me! The thought came to me: Is it possible that just after my experience at the courthouse a woman here in this hotel, at two o'clock in the morning, is inviting me to her room? The cold perspiration broke out on me, for I had always been one of the most dignified and prudent of men in my association with women. But once more she put her head out of the door and invited me to

her room; and this time I recognized the voice of my wife! Without letting me know anything about it she had run down from Asheville to spend Sunday at conference and arrived after I had left the hotel for the courthouse, and she was still awake waiting for me, so as to let me know the room to which I had been changed. It was an hour before my heart recovered its normal strokes.

I was returned to Asheville for the fourth time, and the next March brought to me the most touching sorrow of my life. I received a telegram telling me of the serious illness of my dear old mother, at that time spending a few weeks at my uncle's near Calhoun, Georgia. I hastened to her bedside and found her extremely low, but she was conscious and gave me a look of maternal recognition. She grew rapidly worse, went into a comatose state and the next morning just as the sun climbed up the Eastern horizon she was gathered to her long-sought home.

As the last breath left her body and her breast grew silent forever I felt a sense of loneliness too appalling for description. During my unconscious childhood she had watched over me and emptied her life into mine; in my boyhood she had guarded my steps like an angel; in the years of her desolate widowhood I had been her stay and comfort; during the time I was struggling with poverty to obtain an education she had bared her bosom and borne the brunt at home to give me a chance, and through the years of my active ministry her prayers and sympathies had been my inspiration.

But now her life's work was ended, her burdens had ceased, her sorrows had come to a close, and there rested a heavenly calm upon her dear old face that looked like the sweetness of unbroken repose. She was dead! Her eyes could no longer

see me, her lips could no longer speak to me, her hand could no longer touch me, her smile could greet me no more.

My heart was seized with an aching, tears blinded my eyes, and my bosom was bursting with unheard sobs. I was lonely and lost without her. She was actually gone!

It was in the early morning and merry birds were singing joyously in the nearby woodland. All nature semed busy getting up from her long, wintry sleep and robing herself in the habiliments of green, and orange, and purple, and crimson; and through the uplifted window the sunlight was streaming in and falling like a shower of gold upon her undisturbed face. But she knew it not.

I stood and gazed and gazed upon her peaceful countenance and longed for one more sound of her silent voice, for one more touch of her vanished hand; but there was no response to my heart-cry! I listened, and there was the silent footfall of the angels, and I heard the far-off murmur of the surf of the great halleluiahs. I looked, and I saw in the dim distance the flutter of white robes amid the balm-breathing gardens of God; and I caught the echo of her triumphant shout as she passed through the gates into the city of the immortal!

No, no. She was not dead, but alive forevermore! She was happy with her Savior and her reunited loved ones, in a land where shadows never fall, where the flowers never wither, where the inhabitants never grow old, where ties are never broken, where the songs of the redeemed resound from the glinted hilltops of the eternal!

My heart felt the ecstasy. They were all there but me! I looked about me, and my eye caught sight of the old family Bible lying on her work-table not far from her restful form. It was the same old book that had been her companion through life. Yes, it was the same old book that I saw her take dow

that desolate evening when she returned in her young widowhood from the burial of my father twenty-six years before, and from it then read:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

I ran my hand through its pages. Its leaves were tear-stained, its corners were thumb-marked, and many of its rarest texts and promises were interlined.

During those long and weary years of toil and poverty and hardship this book had been her comfort, her consolation, her never-failing hope. In its truths she had rested her faith; and in death an unseen hand from its apocalyptic vision had reached forth and brushed away the mists and fogs that gathered about the outgoing of her life, and opened to her disembodied spirit the gates of gold!

Were there nothing else to convince me that this old book is the sufficient guide to struggling humanity, as it toils through this earthly pilgrimage to that land from out whose bourne no traveler returns, the joy and support that my dear old mother got out of it is enough to satisfy me.

To her it was divinely inspired, and when all other earthly helpers vanished she found this her unfailing counselor and guide. It was her hope in the days of her youth, it was her pillar of strength when her home-life was founded, it nerved her heart when she threw around her form the sables of comfortless widowhood, and when the warfare was over it flung its heaven-born light athwart the sunless sea. What would her life have been without it? What would my life be in its absence?

As these tender reflections passed in rapid succession through my mind I recalled the following poem, written some years ago by George P. Morris, and I here reproduce it because of its sacred sentiment:



MY MOTHER'S BIBLE

This book is all that's left me now;
Tears will unbidden start;
With faltering lips and throbbing brow
I press it to my heart.

For many generations past
Here is our family tree;
My mother's hand this Bible pressed,
She dying gave it me.

Ah, well do I remember those
Whose names these records bear;
Who, round the hearthstone, used to close
After the evening prayer

And read of what these pages said
In tones my heart would thrill;
Though they are with the silent dead,
Here are they with me still!

My father read this precious book
To brothers, sisters dear;
How calm was my sweet mother's look,
Who loved God's Word to hear.

Her angel face, I see it yet!
What thronging memories come!
Again that little group is met
Within the walls of home.

Thou truest friend man ever knew,
Thy constancy I've tried;
When all were false I've found thee true,
My counselor and guide.

The mines of earth no treasures give
That could this volume buy,
In teaching me the way to live
It's taught me how to die.

CHAPTER XXI

My First General Conference and Adieu to Holston

In May, 1890, the General Conference met in St. Louis, Missouri. It was the first time I had ever looked upon a body of that character. It gave me an opportunity to see and hear the great leaders of the Church. I looked at them with wonder and sized them up as they passed in review before me.

In addition to the Bishops I have already mentioned I saw Bishop Granbery, the St. John of the Episcopal College. Scholarly, polished, mild-mannered, evangelical and unobtrusive, he was one of the most lovable men in the Church. And he was also a man of intellectual parts, though not a towering preacher.

Bishop Hargrove was a man of fine appearance; educated, business-like, amiable and the soul of courtesy. He was a good presiding officer and a sensible preacher, but possessed none of the attractions of the orator. His preaching was solid and substantial, but not strikingly original.

Bishop Hendrix struck me as a man of impressive personality, robust in body, forceful in mind, thoroughly equipped, progressive and an indomitable student. As a preacher he is now numbered among our great men, an ideal presiding officer and to the casual observer a little austere and self-assertive.

Bishop Duncan looked effeminate. His face was that of the

cultured gentleman and his manner was nervous and irritating. In the chair he was often sharp and rasping; in the pulpit he was eloquent and rather attractive; in the private circle he was as gentle and tender as a woman.

Bishop Galloway was even then, though young, the master spirit in the pulpit. He had a most vivacious face, a magnetic manner, good attainments and a matchless orator. He easily became the most popular preacher among his generation of Bishops.

Bishop Key impressed me as a man of great saintliness of life and character, of good intellectual parts, a deeply spiritual nature and an accurate knowledge of practical affairs.

These with the members of the older panel filed into Centenary Church and occupied the rostrum the morning that the General Conference opened.

On the floor were some striking characters. Dr. A. S. Andrews, Dr. John E. Edwards, Dr. A. G. Haygood, Dr. R. N. Sledd, Dr. John J. Tigert, Dr. Warren A. Candler, Dr. E. E. Hoss, Dr. E. E. Wiley, Dr. Paul Whitehead, Dr. A. Coke Smith and scores of others too numerous to mention. In the main it was a strong body of men.

The conference soon got down to business and many of these leaders began to figure in the proceedings of the session, and I had an opportunity to hear them. But as I became more familiar with them in public and in private I was more and more impressed with the fact that, after all, they were only good Methodist preachers, and not so far removed in their greatness from ordinary mortals.

Distance always lends enchantment to the view, and men do not tower up so high when you get close to them and measure them with men of their kind. As a result, while I have ever had the highest appreciation of our leading men, I diminished

very considerably my innate disposition to worship at their shrines as ideal heroes. That General Conference disabused my mind of a great many of its preconceived fancies and invested me with ideas of less grandeur and sublimity in my estimate of great men.

I esteemed it a wonderful privilege to see and hear our English representative, Dr. J. J. Waller of the Wesleyan Church. He was a credit to the splendid body whose greetings he brought. I was woefully disappointed in the fraternal delegates from the Northern Methodist Church. Dr. Bristol, now one of their Bishops, was the clerical representative, and he was an airy, volatile sort of an orator, with inordinate self-esteem. When Bishop Keener responded to the young man and trimmed his comb so effectually, while it was almost a violation of the proprieties of the occasion, I enjoyed it as one of the most interesting episodes of the conference. When Governor Patterson of Pennsylvania, their lay representative, spoke, it was a very prosy and commonplace performance.

When the memorials were introduced and referred I thought the Church would be destroyed. The changes suggested in our economy were radical and revolutionary. Of course I had an idea that coming from great men and leading conferences, they would all be reported favorably and the most of them adopted. I was confident that there would be but little of the Church left by the time that General Conference was through with it. But imagine my pleasant surprise when the Committee on Revisals began to make their daily reports "non-concurring" in nine-tenths of all those wild memorials. So I soon found that the Church was safe, and it greatly relieved my fears and anxieties.

When the time for electing Bishops came the interest grew intense. We were to elect but two. The first ballot was taken

and it was counted publicly. Atticus G. Haygood was elected. He had been elected at Nashville eight years before, but declined ordination. This time he accepted and became one of our Bishops. The next ballot resulted in no election, but Dr. O. P. Fitzgerald, Dr. R. N. Sledd and Dr. David Morton were in the lead. The next time Dr. Fitzgerald was elected and the agony was over. I witnessed their ordination and the ceremony deeply impressed me. That General Conference changed the boundaries of Holston, taking from it the Western North Carolina territory and made another conference in the old North State. Holston opposed the action, but it availed nothing.

This left me a member of the Western North Carolina Conference, very much against my will, and I at once resolved to transfer out of it. After I returned home I had a letter from Bishop Key, who resided at Fort Worth, Texas, asking me to transfer to Texas. I took the matter under advisement and in the course of the summer I determined to comply with his request. I had always wanted to come to Texas since my meeting, in my early ministry, with Rev. Fred Allen of the Texas Conference, in Jasper, Georgia. But when my letter reached Fort Worth the Bishop had gone to Missouri to inspect the work up there, as he was to hold those conferences. It followed him and he received it in Kansas City, Missouri. The next I heard from him he wrote me that he needed me there and wanted me to go to Centenary Church in that city, and hoped that I would not resist his desire to have me. I had not then learned how to resist the authorities of the Church, and have never learned it. So somewhat against my will to Kansas City I went.

I was sorry to bid Holston adieu. It was the land of my birth and the scene of my ministry thus far. I had been

treated beyond my deserts, and had filled its leading appointments, and they were still open to me; but it seemed that Providence was ordering otherwise. Every spot in that hill country was dear to me, and my attachment to many of its members was tender and abiding. It was no easy matter to sever ties so sacred and try my fortunes in a strange land. And if I had known then what I afterwards learned in the Southwest Missouri Conference, I doubt if the change had been made, if left to me. It was so different from my experience and association in dear old Holston! Her men were so natural and full of inspiration. I will here mention a few of them.

Rev. John M. McTeer was easily the field-preacher of the conference. He was large and rugged in person, gifted with natural powers of declamation, a voice of marvelous sweetness and far-reaching compass and a Presiding Elder of the old-time school. He served in that office longer than any member of the body. He was not a very social man in his disposition, rather grum and self-contained, but a man of great forcefulness of character. He was not generally popular among his brethren, and not always a prudent and discreet man. Toward the close of his life he more than once became involved in trouble. There were those who disliked him, and much was made of his weaknesses, and his sun went down somewhat dimmed. But in many respects he was a useful minister of the gospel.

Rev. George W. Miles was a man of great physical energy and endurance, not largely endowed intellectually, but a master of details. He was a good judge of men, knew his limitations and did more than an ordinary business on ordinary capital. He had a pleasant disposition, strong will, persistent determination, and he knew how to get the confidence of his brethren



and use it to good purpose. His weak point was in the pulpit, but he made an untiring and useful Presiding Elder. He loved the Church, reared a good family, closed out a successful ministry and died in the triumphs of a bright faith.

Rev. Frank Richardson was in his prime in my day in the conference. He was a man of wiry and well-knit physique, well educated, of an intense temperament, a fine mind and a preacher of splendid parts. He is one of the few men whom I have known in my life to take a second growth after he had passed middle manhood. When past fifty he was traveling an obscure circuit and had but little influence in the conference. But he began to rise and inside of five years he was one of the formest men among his brethren, and from that day till his death he was the most prominent and influential man in that body. He lived beyond his fourscore years, but he was active in body, alert in mind and a militant leader of the hosts of Zion. He was always a trifle extreme, even a little revolutionary, and somewhat sensitive in nature; but nobody ever failed to know his mind on a given issue and his honesty of purpose was never doubted by layman or minister. He was known familiarly as "Uncle Frank", and he was greatly beloved by his brethren. His life was one of consecration and success.

Rev. R. N. Price was always the original man in the conference. Somewhat angular in person, with a big brain, a rugged face, well-trained, extensively read, a crisp writer, a unique preacher, and easily one of the most interesting men I have ever known. At one time he was a popular and successful pastor, but turned aside to editorial work, taught some in the colleges, became literary in his habits, and he is now the historian of his conference. His sharp and incisive mind has not always held a perfect equipoise, and now and then he has gone

off after a modern cult and pursued it to extreme conclusions. That such a brain as he possesses, with its originality and curious habits of inquiry, has been a bit eccentric and peculiar is not a matter of surprise. But "Dick Price", as he has always been known, has left his mark in the Holston Conference, and his whole life has been one of purity and honor. He only lacked a very little of being a great man in his position in the Church.

Dr. E. E. Wiley I have already mentioned, but he is entitled to larger notice. As a preacher he stood in the front rank, not in his oratory and eloquence, but in his clearness of perception, his grasp of his subject, in his distinctness of utterance and his masterful diction. He was for nearly half a century Presdent of Emory and Henry College, and more young men passed through his hands than any other one man in that section of country. He was never in charge of a pastorate, but he was always an active participant in the proceedings of the conference. He was a Northern man by birth and education, but in his prejudices he became one of the most intense Southern men among us. And this brings me to an incident characteristic of him.

He was educated in Wesleyan University at Middleton, Connecticut. When he graduated he came South and accepted a professorship at Emory and Henry. Just as he entered the university the late Bishop Gilbert Haven went out of it into the active work of the ministry and became a rampant abolitionist. Just after the war he was elected to the Episcopacy and was located in Atlanta, Georgia. He believed in negro equality, the intermarriage of the races and such vagaries. He and Dr. Wiley never met in their lves, but they often exchanged public compliments. The Doctor had no earthly use for Bishop Gilbert Haven; and I heard him more than once



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TRAINED NURSE

on the conference floor advise our preachers to have nothing to do with him, not even to recognize him. He thought it was an insult to the South for the Northern Church to send him among us with his ultra views on the negro question.

While I was stationed in Knoxville Dr. N. G. Taylor invited me to take tea with his family one evening, and when I entered the house he introduced me to Bishop Haven. Had I known that he was there maybe I would not have accepted the invitation. Dr. Wiley had filled me with prejudice. The Bishop was a stockily-built man, podgy and ungainly. He had a large head covered with short reddish-gray hair and a bright, sparkling face. He grasped my hand and received me with much cordiality. I found him affable and delightful in personal intercourse. He had been everywhere, and he had seen everything, and he seemed to know all that there was to be known. I had the evening of my life with him. As he bade me good-bye he held my hand and said:

"How is my old friend Dr. Wiley? I have never met him, but I have known him all my life. He and myself have always been on opposite sides of questions, but I have great respect for him. But he does not like me."

I told him of the Doctor, and he continued:

"I was up at Glade Springs the other day, four miles above Emory, and I came very nearly walking down to see Wiley, but I feared that my visit would not be welcome. I wanted to tell him that three months ago I was in Africa, and one hot Sunday morning I gathered a few straggling flowers and walked three miles into the country to a lone graveyard and found the grave of Mary Wiley Gardener, put the flowers on it and bowed my head in gratitude for the gift of that noble woman who died a martyr to our Church away over there in

the long ago. I wanted to tell Wiley about it. I will ask you to do it for me the next time you see him."

A few weeks after that I met Dr. Wiley and told him I had a message from Bishop Gilbert Haven for him. He looked astonished and said:

"What word did he want to send me? I care nothing about him. And I am surprised that you took tea with him. Our preachers ought to let him severely alone."

I told him the Bishop said that he had come very nearly calling to see him a few weeks before. The old Doctor said:

"Well, I am glad that he did not come."

But I said to him, listen to the message, that it was interesting. Then I proceeded to give it to him in the Bishop's language. He listened attentively and with tears in his eyes he said:

"I wish he had come. I would take anybody into my home and heart who would walk three miles through an African sun to put flowers on the grave of my sister Mary. She was the purest saint God ever gave to the Church. I wish Gilbert Haven had called to see me."

After all his prejudice was only on the surface, and when brushed away it amounted to nothing.

Rev. W. W. Bayes at one time gave promise of a ministry somewhat like that of Dr. Munsey, but he did not reach that towering height of the great mountain orator. He had a brilliant mind, however, not systematically trained, but remarkable in its poetic gift and in its dazzling imagination. He was for a long time one of the star preachers of the conference, an earnest, devout man, full of faith and eminently useful in his active days in the Church. Personally he was a small man with a large head, a swarthy face and a nervous temperament.

His matured life was not the fulfillment of the expectation inspired by his extraordinary beginning, but it was well that such was not the case. A great genius in the pulpit is not as useful as the man of lesser gifts and larger consecration.

Rev. J. S. Burnett was a man of extraordinary natural gifts, but he turned aside from the ministry in early life for business pursuits, and in later life when he retraced his steps he was too far advanced ever to make the preacher he would have become had he continued from the beginning. But he had large endowments and he was bright and witty and popular. Occasionally he would preach a sermon of marvelous compass and splendid reaches, but he often fell below his ability in the pulpit. He was susceptible to moods and once in awhile he would become morbid, but he was a good and true man and left his impression on the conference. He reached a ripe old age and died in great peace.

Rev. James A. Burrow is one of the younger men of the conference, but he was prominent a few years before I severed my relation with that body. He had a boyish face and a boyish voice in the pulpit, but his sermons would have done credit to a man of forty. He was exceedingly bright, catchy, eloquent and direct in his preaching. While I was at Chattanooga I had him preach for me one night, and he electrified the audience. Old Sister Jordan, a very enthusiastic and impulsive woman, rushed around to the altar and pressed her way up to him while a great many were shaking hands with him and exclaimed:

"I wanted to shake hands with that young brother. I thank God that I have lived to see the day when that Scripture is fulfilled: 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength'."

It created a ripple. Dr. Burrow is still one of the leading

men of that conference. He is beyond the average, by far, as a preacher.

Rev. R. G. Waterhouse came into the conference a few years after I did. I was at a District Conference at Kingston, Roane County, in the summer of 1876, and young Waterhouse was a lay delegate. He and myself took a walk one evening and he told me of his purpose to enter the ministry and advised with me about going to school. I told him by all means to go to Hiwassee College for a couple of years, and then go to Emory and Henry and finish and he would be ready for the conference, and he took my advice. I watched his progress and development with interest. He entered the conference, soon took high rank, filled its leading appointments, served for years as President of Emory and Henry, and in May, 1910, at the General Conference in Asheville, I helped to elect him one of our Bishops. He is a large man physically and intellectually and gives promise of making a great Bishop in the Church of God.

Rev. Joe Haskew was one of the most noted circuit riders and Presiding Elders in the conference. When I knew him he was an old man and we called him Uncle Joe. He was tall, bony and had a shambling gait. His face was smooth and had never known a beard or a razor. He had a withered look. He was bowlegged. Dr. Lafferty once said of him that he had traveled circuits throughout Holston so long and continuously that his legs were as crooked as pothooks; and it was measurably true. He was a fine preacher of the old type, had a fine sense of humor and could always hold his own in any circle. He was a devoutly religious man. Once he was on his way through the country to an appointment, and on the roadside he saw some men shoveling dirt and throwing up an embankment. He said to them:

"You men are violating the Sabbath. You had better quit and go with me to Church."

One of them told him that they were preparing a pool for a baptizing that evening, that it was a case of taking the ass out of the ditch on Sunday. Uncle Joe saw his opening and as quick as lightning he replied:

"It seems to me that instead of taking the ass out of the ditch you are getting ready to throw him in."

And he clucked to his horse and rode on.

Rev. Carroll Long was one of the choicest spirits in the conference. He had one of the most transparent faces into which I ever looked and his character was beautiful in its spirituality. As a preacher he was doctrinal, evangelistic and inspiring. He was as gentle as a woman in his disposition and as guileless as a child in his nature. He was deservedly popular, and for years was a delegate to the General Conference. He had great powers of absorption. He could hear a sermon or read a good book and rework its substance into his own discourses and give to the result the stamp of his own originality. I once heard him say that at the General Conference he made it a point to hear fifteen or twenty good sermons and from them he extracted material enough to last him nearly through a quadrennium. He served the Church with great efficiency, usually on districts, and in the end he had a glorious translation.

But why dwell longer on those old Holston heroes? I could write a volume and then leave the records of many of them untouched. These few samples will give my readers some idea of them as a class. No other conference of my knowledge can boast of so many strikingly outstanding men. They have always been the true sons of nature and they stand closely related to their native mountain scenery with its rippling waters,

its picturesque foothills and its bright Italian skies. Bishop Wightman once remarked that the Holston preacher could not be otherwise than eloquent and ornate; that his natural environment was conducive to no other sort of pulpit product.

When I awoke and found myself in Kansas City I realized that I was in a new world. It had grown into a place of nearly half a million within the few years of an ephemeral boom period. There had never been anything like it in the development of a municipality. Its population had converged from the four quarters of the United States, and I doubt if such a mixture of peoples ever entered into the composite life of a single community. They had all gone there to make money; some of them had succeeded and thousands of them had utterly failed. There was not much stability or solidarity in their character and civilization. And when I reached the city in the fall of 1890 the boom had exploded; thousands of empty houses were everywhere in sight, thousands of people had left and thousands of those remaining were out of employment. The Churches had caught the spirit of the people; they had become congested with members, and then the reflex had left many of them pressed financially and depleted in numbers. There was a spirit of restlessness and discouragement in all the congregations.

I had charge of Centenary Church in a district midway between the residence section and the business district. I found a membership of a few hundred. Among them were several strong business men, supposedly, but they were burdened with heavy obligations. It was a difficult matter for them to keep the finances of the Church to date. There was no evangelistic spirit among them. All that I could do was to hold them together and await more favorable conditions. Then, too, Kansas City was the boldest and most unblushing place in its

wickedness I had ever seen. Saloons and low theaters infested the place. Churches were not generally respected; and a preacher was no more than any other man. His cloth amounted to nothing. If he was able to attract attention by the sheer force of his intellect and ability, he was known in the city; otherwise he was a notch on a stick.

I looked over the field of my operation, and it was more limited, even in the city, than if I had been in a small town or a rural district. My environs were largely restricted to my own congregation. I saw that I had a problem on my hands. But I determined to tackle the job with some vigor. I did not intend to live in the midst of such seething wickedness, even in Kansas City, without lifting up my voice and crying aloud. I waited, however, until I had gotten my bearings and had somewhat won the confidence and attention of my own people. Then I opened a fusillade. The daily papers there were sensational in the last degree. The reporters were on the lookout for something spectacular, and they sought out my night services.

They were not disappointed, and it was not long until my name was posted in flaming headlines every Monday morning. They published every word that I uttered and gave to some of them such trimmings as suited their purposes. Editorially they waded into me and gibed me with their wit and reparte, and sometimes they would treat me with serious consideration. But I did not let up. Each Sunday night my house was crowded and I became known in Kansas City, if I did nothing else while there.

During the most of the entire winter I continued to expose the rottenness of the city life and the prurient type of its nightly entertainments and debauchery. We certainly had hot times at Centenary Church. But it was like shooting



grains of sand into the volume of the muddy waters of the sluggish Missouri River that dragged its slow length by the city.

I closed out the first year in advance of what I found it, and my reports were creditable. However, they were not satisfactory to me. My people had in the main stood by me and given me their support, for many of them were true and devoted Christian men and women. When I returned the second year the boom was just about exhausted; a number of my business men were on the verge of bankruptcy. They fixed my salary below a living point, but they finally reconsidered it and did better. But they discouraged me by their own pessimism and their failure to respond to my efforts to lead them out into lines of progress. I, therefore, determined to do my level best that year and then retire from the job. I saw that to remain under the circumstances was to butt my head against a stone wall; and it has always been my principle either to do something worthy of my effort as a minister or seek another field where results are possible.

So as the spring approached Bishop Hargrove was in Kansas City and he asked me if it was my purpose to remain in that conference permanently. I told him it certainly was not; that I intended to close out my part of it that year. He told me that suited him exactly; that he had the whole empire of Texas on his hand and he wanted some new men, and that he would put me down in his notebook and throw me into the Texas work the next fall. I labored on like a Trojan and made some little progress.

That conference met early in September and Bishop Galloway presided. He wanted to take me back to Holston, but I told him I was booked for Texas. He asked me what point in Texas. I told him no special point, that I was simply in

the hands of Bishop Hargrove and he would place me when he held the conferences, and that I wanted him to transfer me to any one of the Texas Conference. He said that he had just had a letter from the Bishop asking that I be transferred to the Northwest Texas Conference. When he saw I was determined he read me out transferred to the Northwest Texas Conference. I remained in Kansas City until the sixteenth of November and on that date I had a telegram from Bishop Hargrove to go at once and take charge of Shearn Memorial Church, Houston. And I at once headed for Texas. That was in the fall of 1892.



CHAPTER XXII

The Beginning of My Experience in Texas

Twenty years ago I came to Texas and dedicated my life to the work of the Church in this great empire of the Southwest. I did not come ignorantly or aimlessly, but intelligently. I had been a reader of the Texas Christian Advocate for years and I was also familiar with the daily papers of the State. Especially the year previous to my coming did I read the Dallas Daily News, the Houston Post and the Austin Statesman. These put me in touch with the resources, the products and the politics of the State. I read with great interest the sensational campaign between Governor Hogg and Judge Clark and this struggle gave me some idea of the political issues then dominant in the public mind.

In addition to these sources of information I had copies of the printed minutes of the five Texas Annual Conferences, and from these I learned a great deal about the affairs of the Church and its marvelous possibilities and outlook in this great territory. Therefore when I reached Texas I was well acquainted with the names of its leading men, its magnitude and its wonderful resources.

On the sixteenth day of November I left Kansas City for Houston, and a fierce blizzard was raging all over that section of the country. The winters come on early in that climate.

I had on heavy underwear, a warm winter suit, a Kansas overcoat, earmuffs and Arctic overshoes. Even then I was none too comfortable.

I spent Sunday in Pilot Point and there met Uncle Buck Hughes, who was then pastor. From thence I went on to my destination, and when I arrived in Houston on Tuesday morning the thermometer was ninety! I thought I would melt before my lighter-weight apparel arrived. There was no evidence of winter, and to my surprise the winter never did come. The geraniums bloomed in the yards the year round.

Houston was then an insignificant city, a sort of an overgrown town with but few public improvements and no paved streets. The business houses were not imposing, and when it rained the mud was intolerable. The old Buffalo Bayou gave forth an atmosphere the like of which I had never inhaled. It dragged its slow length like a huge serpent through the city and the boats continually stirred the murky waters. It was almost stagnant and remained such until some booming freshet swept it out toward the Gulf. The fumes constantly rising from it gave forth an odor that was something fierce. The weeds were rank along the most of the streets, and the residences mostly sat on blocks. It was a crude-looking town.

The house into which we moved was on McKinney Street, midway between Milam and Travis Streets, and it was slightly higher at the two intersections than in the middle; and this made a pond ankle deep just in front of us. That night the croaking frogs made the community ring with their discordant music. I had run down in health again and only weighed one hundred and twenty-six pounds, and I remarked to my wife as we sat and listened to those frogs that we had just as well go to the cemetery and purchase a lot; that she would plant me there before the end of a quadrennium. It looked to

me like one of the most unsanitary and disease-breading places we had ever lived.

The morning I arrived I repaired to the old Rice Hotel, and when I returned from the breakfast table I met A. G. Howell and other representatives of my Church looking for me. They gave me a cordial welcome, took me to several of the leading business places and introduced me to many of our people, and then delivered me over to the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Chew.

There I was received as an old-time acquaintance and friend, though they had never heard of me until my name had been read out to them at the recent conference. They entertained me until my family arrived a few days later. There a personal friendship began which abides to this good day.

How tender and intimate is the relation that exists between a Methodist minister and his people! The very fact that the Church vouches for his character and standing is sufficient to give him the right of way to their confidence and love the moment he enters upon his work among them, regardless of the fact that he is in reality a stranger to them. Woe betide the minister who would betray such confidence and prove unworthy of such love!

The following Thursday was Thanksgiving Day and service was already announced. I was on hand and a good congregation greeted me. We had a good service, and at its close they gave me a royal reception. Scores and scores of them grasped my hand and bade me welcome. I saw at once that I was in the house of my friends, though not one of them had ever seen or known me before.

The change from Kansas City to Houston was as marked socially as the winter seasons of the two places. In the former the people were cold, distant and formal. Even in pastoral

work I had found it more business-like than cordial. A minister was something like a hired man. But here they were warm, open-hearted, whole-souled and demonstrative.

I felt like I had dropped from the regions of the North Pole with its snow and freeze and blizzard into the temperature of the Tropics with its birds and flowers and sunshine. They were the sort of Methodists whom I had always known before I crossed the "Father of Waters". I had again found a place where a preacher was a brother as well as a pastor, and where his work counted for something as an asset in the community. His influence and personal presence stood for something, even outside his own congregation. He was a dominant factor in the forces that enter into the moral, the civic and the religious life of the people.

I never felt so complacently and more at home in all my life, and everything in my mind and heart spoke up and commanded me to place myself unreservedly upon their altar of service. It was a positive luxury to obey the order.

Shearn Church was one of the oldest in the State. It started immediately after General Houston took charge of Santa Anna down on San Jacinto Bay in 1836, and it had grown into a strong congregation. The building was not prepossessing. It was a substantial brick, whose architecture had intended to represent a Maltese cross, but before it was started a stroke of economy had touched the builders and they had chopped off the upper end of the cross, giving to the structure an unfinished and an ill-shaped effect. But for several years it had met the requirements of their needs, and it had grown old-looking and somewhat dilapidated.

The pulpit platform ran almost completely across the back end of the building and the handsome bird's-eye maple pipe organ occupied a loft considerably above the pulpit. The audi-

torium would seat in the neighborhood of six hundred people. The first Sunday it was crowded, and I saw at a glance that I had a splendid body of men and women. They represented all classes of people, including strong business men, workingmen, elderly men and young men. And before me were as fine a class of good women as ever faced a minister.

As I sat in the pulpit I gazed at them, and for the moment studied them with interest. S. M. McAshan looked like an old Roman, with his intelligent face indicative of thought, punctuality and great orderliness. T. W. House looked like an Englishman, sedate, quiet, observant and unobstrusive. T. W. Ford had the appearance of a Senator, wise, intellectual and serious. G. W. Schultz was alert, quick and like a pleasant-mannered business man. Jacob V. Dealy was solid, slow, steady and reliable. A. G. Howell and W. B. Chew reminded me of men ready to do things. Judge E. P. Hamblin reminded me of a polished lawyer, incisive and exacting. W. F. Kraul was full of music, and J. M. Cotton carried the face of a man careful in details and ready for any word or work. Charles Bering looked like the devout German that I always found him to be in the work of the Church. J. M. Frost impressed me as a man who had gone up against the world with some force, and who had learned from experience what it was to appreciate the power of religion. But I cannot mention them all, for their names are legion. In my four years' experience with them I never found a more devoted and reliable set of people. They more than fulfilled all the hopes that my first contact with them inspired.

It was not long until I realized that we not only needed more room, but more especially the house needed renovating as well as enlarging. So the first thing we did was to raise three thousand dollars and wipe out the debt on the property

incurred by the purchase of the organ and needed street improvement. This out of the way, I was ready to spring the church improvement. My leading business men entered into my plans heartily, except Brother McAshan. He was a very cautious and calculating man. He had to be convinced before you could move him out of his groove into a new channel of enterprise. But before we had gone far he surrendered and did his part manfully. The enterprise would require six thousand dollars, for we determined to add the missing part of the cross and finish the original design. I had things going my way and was getting the subscriptions as fast as I could call on my people.

But one morning I received a shock. My Presiding Elder came into my office, and my acquaintance with him was limited. I had only met him casually a time or two and knew but little of him as a man or a preacher. He lived several miles from the city on a farm and he was busy out there and with his other appointments, and I had seen nothing of him. His name was Rev. E. W. Solomon. He had just preceded me in the pastorate of the Church. He was tall in person, rawboned in construction, with an impetuous manner, a large nose and mouth and a voice like a trumpet. His first words were:

"I understand, sir, that you are preparing to raise and spend six thousand dollars on this church building."

I looked at him in astonishment and wondered what next! But I told him that was exactly what we were getting ready to do.

"Then," he said, "I want you to understand that I shall oppose the enterprise, sir. We do not need it; and, besides, we do need to build another place of worship in the old Fair Ground Addition."

It took the breath out of me. But I rallied and told him

that we were certainly going ahead and make the improvement, and that I did not see what he had to do with it. I right then and there came to the conclusion that I was going to have a hard time with that Presiding Elder; that he was something new under the sun to me.

But my trouble was, I did not know Solomon then as I soon learned to know him, and have known him well and pleasantly through all the years since then. I went ahead, collected the money, finished the job and it was beautiful, with its new furniture and attractive carpet. We invited Bishop Key to dedicate it and had arranged for Brother Solomon to be on hand to take a part in it. I had not seen him since our encounter, and did not know how he still felt. But on Saturday before the dedication I stepped into the auditorium and there stood my Elder looking at the new church. He spoke to me pleasantly and said:

"Well, sir, you have done a good work. It is beautiful, and I congratulate you."

That made me warm up to him, and ever afterward I found him to be a man of big heart, outspoken convictions, impulsive in his speech and action, sincere and clear in his motives and a preacher of studious habits and at times brilliant in his sermons. All that is necessary in Dr. Solomon's case is for you to know him and get close to him and his brusque exterior gives way to as good and kind a heart as beats in the bosom of any man.

Bishop Key preached us a delightfully spiritual sermon, and for the first time I had an opportunity to meet him and to know him personally. And during all these twenty years in Texas he has been my fast and faithful friend and one of the truest and most transparent men whom it has been my privilege ever to know. Since then I have been with him much



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YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE FAMILY



and seen him under most all circumstances, and have had occasion to study him in the many interesting phases of his life and character, and he stands in my esteem the ideal man of my acquaintance.

But I shall have more to say of him in the course of my story, and for the present will turn to other matters. Having finished and dedicated the church, we were ready then for a forward movement. We had the room and the facilities, and the prospect was inviting.

My first conference was at Navasota, presided over by Bishop Hendrix, and the members of that body were cordial and brotherly toward me. There I met the Rev. Seth Ward and cast my vote for him as a delegate to the General Conference. Rev. Joseph Sears was prominent in that body, and a truer man never lived. His recent death gave me genuine sorrow, for he was always my fast friend. If I remember correctly that was the last session of this conference that the Rev. I. G. John ever attended. He was one of our Missionary Secretaries at that time. He had been prominent in that body for a great many years, having been editor of the Texas Christain Advocate through the period of its struggle to keep its head above the water. He was physically a small man, but possessed of good ability, and a preacher of clearness and deep spirituality. He died the following year, mourned by his brethren and loved by a wide circle of friends.

During my pastorate at Shearn I had for associate ministers most excellent brethren, among whom was that rare character and unique preacher, the Rev. John E. Green. Every conference has some member who stands out incomparable in some of the traits and qualities of his personality and ministry, and Brother Green is that man in the Texas Conference. He is very tall and slender, with a good head and a poetic face, and

a style of ministry all his own. He assumes all sorts of attitudes in the pulpit, concentrates in his sermons a greater variety of subject-matter, and is one of the best read men in his knowledge of the letter of the Scriptures of my acquaintance. It is almost a show sometimes to see him in full operation in the pulpit. But with all his peculiarities of style and manner he has as noble a heart in him as ever throbbed, and he is also a preacher of no mean parts. As a revivalist, especially among railroadmen and the stalwart working classes, he is unsurpassed. He is one of the purest and most guileless men I have ever known.

I had good success the second year at Shearn, had many accessions, built up the Sunday-school, largely increased my Sunday congregations and my prayer-meetings were the best I have ever known.

The next conference met at Cameron, and Bishop Hargrove presided. He was a superior presiding officer, and his preaching was instructive and edifying.

My third year was bolder and more aggressive. I arranged for a great meeting and had Sam Jones and George R. Stuart to conduct it. It was held in the city auditorium and was attended by immense congregations. Sam Jones did some direct preaching and stirred the city considerably, but the meeting was not so fruitful of spiritual results as the one at Chattanooga. Brother Stuart remained after the meeting closed at the auditorium and gave me a very helpful series of meetings in the Church.

Gambling was open and above board in the city. It was as public as the Church service or the theater. Grand juries paid no attention to it, and the officers of the law were as blind as bats in daylight to it. Crime originated in those dens, and young men were being ruined in them, and several murders



occurred in them. I determined to make war on them. But I determined to inform myself before undertaking the conflict. I knew what it meant.

So I threw off my collar and tie, put on some working clothes and devoted two nights to an investigation of them. I had no difficulty whatever. Their doors were open and unguarded. Nobody on the inside noticed any one entering the place. Every den was crowded and they were numerous along the streets. All sorts of gaming devices were provided and every form of gambling in operation. I got the street number of each place, the names of the games played, the number and names of those who were the owners and proprietors; and by the time I was through I had material enough to stir the city.

I carefully prepared a series of sermons and for several Sunday nights I opened up on those evil institutions with some exceedingly hot stuff. I gave locations by street and number; I called names of men in charge of the places, told of the games played, of the drinking and the debauchery, pointed out how workingmen were fleeced and young men were being ruined; and the Houston Post, then edited by Judge E. P. Hill, published every word of those sermons in the Monday morning editions. The Post then was a paper worthy the support and patronage of moral people.

The crusade produced a profound sensation and it brought me and my Church work into prominence, not only in the city, but throughout that portion of the State. I was called before the grand jury, indictments were secured and many of the gamblers fined and sent to jail for short terms. But it only slowed down the business and made it more careful; it did not put a permanent check upon it. It was too firmly rooted in the public sentiment of the place and in the habits of too many people for any single effort to go far toward remedying

the prevailing practice. But it helped to introduce the forces that finally made gambling a felony in Texas.

That summer our conference for the Epworth League met in St. James Church, Galveston, and it was largely attended by the young people and most of the preachers. Seth Ward was our Presiding Elder, and one of the best I had ever had. I had something to do with his appointment to the district. My acquaintance with him became intimate and our friendship confidential. He was one of the purest and worthiest men of his day. There was never an unclean thing in him. He was naturally a man of solid endowments, consecutive in his thinking, studious in his habits, serious in his cast of mind, not given to humor or levity, and gifted in his powers of reason. His correct use of English and his diction were marvelous in view of the fact that he was not a college-bred man. He had elements of greatness and his personality was dominant and commanding. He was lovable in his disposition and positive without austerity. To know him was to give him the right of way to your confidence. He was present at this League Conference.

He and others received a severe shock at the close of that gathering by reading the next morning in the Galveston News an article under the head, "Two Clerical Sports, and Their Episode in the City". The article called no names, but said they were both prominent ministers from the interior, one a Presiding Elder and the other a station preacher; that they were left over by the League Conference and had put in the night in a series of debaucheries; that they had slipped from a carriage at two o'clock in the morning to beat the hackman out of his fare; that he had them arrested and the matter had leaked out. The article created a sensation and put Methodists to guessing.



A good many people had intimated that the description fitted Seth Ward and myself! He brought the paper to my office and showed it to me. I read it and he asked me who were the parties? I told him that it was an easy matter to locate them. We both agreed that they were E. H. Harman of the Brenham District and W. Wimberly of the Brenham Station. We went back to Galveston and made a slight investigation and our surmise was correct. He was ordered by Bishop Keener to appoint a committee on investigation, which he did, composed of C. R. Lamar, O. T. Hotchkiss and myself.

We made the preliminary inquiry according to the Discipline, and we were not long in unearthing one of the most unbelievable set of facts in connection with those men that ever went into the records of a Church court. They denied, of course, but the evidence was beyond all question. Hotchkiss was appointed to prosecute Harman and I to prosecute Wimberly at the approaching conference at Brenham.

We gave some attention to strengthening both cases against them in the interim and when the conference met the trial of these two miscreants was the sensation of the session. Hotchkiss made out a strong case against Harman and so did I against Wimberly. Dr. H. V. Philpott defended him. When the evidence was closed I briefly stated to the committee what I proposed to prove and then gave way to the argument of the defense. Wimberly asked the privilege to be heard in his own behalf.

He was a striking-looking fellow and gifted as an orator. He was naturally dramatic and extremely so on that occasion. He spoke for four hours and a quarter and at the close of his impassioned appeal he bowed on his knees before the committee, opened a copy of the Discipline and said:

"I lay this on my heart, oh, God: and say that if it were the Bible I would look up into thy face and tell thee that thou knowest that I am as innocent of these charges as an unborn babe."

The committee looked astounded. I shall never forget the look of supreme disgust that came into the face of Dr. Philpott. He was a very positive and dogmatic man in his disposition, and he had elements of greatness in his character. He was largely endowed, rather scholarly in his acquirements; he was doggedly honest, had no tolerance for shams or hypocrisies; had a high sense of honor, great pride of character, and thoroughly conscious of his gifts and ability. Had it not been for some eccentricities of mind and a serious lack of thorough intellectual equipoise he might have gone into the highest positions in the Church. He had the brain and the attainments. And no living man ever questioned his honesty and unbending integrity.

He arose to make his speech for Wimberly, and began as follows:

"Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: In my early life I was a lawyer for a number of years and practiced criminal law before the courts of the country, and I know something about the proprieties of proceedings of this kind. I want to say that it was an established maxim among men at the bar in my day that the man who represents his own case before a jury has a fool for his client, and if this maxim has not had a complete vindication for the last four hours in your hearing, then I am no judge of things of this sort. Nevertheless, I shall proceed to do what I can for the unfortunate brother."

Then for half an hour he gave a succinct statement of every item of testimony in the least degree favorable to Wimberly's



case. I closed in a speech of an hour, and in ten minutes the committee came in with a verdict of guilty and expelled him from the ministry and the Church.

A similar verdict was rendered in Harman's case. It was the saddest condition of things that ever came before that conference.

Two months after that Wimberly came to my office in Houston, made a full confession of the whole thing and said that we did not find out the half of their performance in Galveston; told me that he was down and out, his family in want, and asked me if I would not see Seth Ward, make up some money for him and help him to get his family to Louisiana, where friends would at least keep them from starving. I called up Seth Ward and he and myself chipped in and with the help of a few friends we raised the money and sent them all to Plaquemine, Louisiana.

But that was not the last of Wimberly. He joined the Northern Methodist Church, with these facts known to them, came back on the Beaumont Mission, was then transferred to one of the Northwest Conferences, Nebraska, I believe; filled some good appointments, got into some sort of trouble and the Presiding Elder wrote to me to know of his escapade in Texas, and I wrote him the facts. A few weeks after that I received a letter from Wimberly at New Orleans, Louisiana, saying that I had slandered him, and he would give me two days to write him a retraction of the statements in my letter to the Presiding Elder in the Northwest; and that if I failed he would bring suit against me in the Federal courts for criminal libel. I dropped his letter into the waste-basket and have never heard more from him.

Harman, poor fellow, died a few years ago in Brenham, and thus closed one of the most deplorable and regrettable episodes

that ever blackened the history of the old Texas Conference. Those cases gave me a view of human nature that, up to that time, I had never dreamed possible in connection with the ministry.

My last year at Shearn Memorial was a pleasant and a busy one. I succeeded in getting some of my people interested in some sane rescue work among the outcast of the city. My study of that situation unfolded to me social tragedies of the most pathetic nature. I induced Mr. Charles Crittenden, the great New York rescue specialist, to visit Houston and hold a series of meetings at the city hall. He did much to arouse public interest, and we soon put a plan on foot to establish a Rescue Home. It was moving along satisfactorly when my term of service closed and the result is in Houston to-day.

My Church was in good condition; the organization was compact, the membership large, and its influence far-reaching in the life of the city. Houston had grown twice its size since I had first seen it, and improvements were many and modern. That is the only charge that I ever served where I imagined that the time limit moved me before my work was done. But that impression may have been more pronounced in my imagination than in fact.

Be that as it may, Bishop Keener came to my house one morning from the West Texas Conference and asked me if he could stop with me three or four days and have immunity from company and be given a room where he could be left mostly to himself. I answered in the affirmative, and then he handed me his grip and walked into the house. For three days scarcely any one knew that he was there. At the close of the last day, which was Friday, he came down and sat with my family and told me that his work was done; that he would leave for Dallas the next morning and spend Sunday with the people of

that charge, and the following week hold the session of the North Texas Conference. He told me that he had put in the time with the minutes of that body for the past four years and that in the past three days he had practically made all the appointments. And he further apprised me that I was to go to that conference, but he did not say to what appointment.

My four years in Houston had been delightful and the Texas Conference had been kind and generous to me. I made scores of warm friends among its members, and they abide to this day. Throughout all the intervening years they have been true and unflinching in their co-operation with me in the work to which the Church has since assigned me; and when times of conflict have come they have never wavered.

Often it has been my privilege to revisit the old congregation and preach to them, and though from time to time they have changed and some of them have passed to the Church above, and recently the congregation has moved into the most cathedral-like temple in Texas Methodism, yet they are the same devoted and splendid people. It is like going back home and to my own circle every time I spend a season among the old Shearn Methodists. When I bade them adieu Rev. Seth Ward succeeded me, and in them he found cordiality and responsiveness, and in him they found a princely preacher and pastor.

CHAPTER XXIII

From South Texas to North Texas

My stay in Houston was not only pleasant, but it was conducive to my health and general physical improvement. I increased in weight from one hundred and twenty-six pounds to one hundred and forty-five, and I felt like a rejuvenated man. Instead of finding a place of abode in the cemetery, as I had feared, I took on a new lease of life. That salt air was the tonic I needed and all that I lost in Kansas City I more than regained in South Texas. Some people need the air of the mountains, but I needed the breezes of the Gulf.

When the Texas Conference met in Bastrop, with Bishop Hendrix in the chair, I was transferred to the North Texas Conference. I really regretted to leave that section of the State and those excellent brethren, but it seemed a necessity under the circumstances. However, I felt that Texas was one, though divided into five conferences.

True, the lines between them were closely drawn, but the Methodism of the State was one. Nevertheless I found a striking difference between the people of South and North Texas; and I also found a difference between the preachers of the two sections.

Down there is a large mixture of foreign peoples, and the effect upon the customs and usages of the people is marked.

They have a somewhat different texture of civilization. Many of the people of foreign extraction have become largely Americanized, it is true, but many of them are as distinctively foreign as though they were living in Continental Europe or in Old Mexico.

Among them are German, Bohemian and Italian communities, but Houston was and is a composite mixture of many sorts of peoples. A Catholic priest in that city told me that in his one congregation he had nine distinct nationalities. The influence of this condition is seen in the social and political life of the city. The saloons are a potent element, and in municipal politics they are a dominant force.

In North Texas it is vastly different. The population is largely native, and American ideas and customs more largely prevail. There are comparatively few foreign peoples, and their presence and influence are not so much felt in Church and State. Protestant Christianity, the public schools and the English language have the right of way. Moral sentiment is in the ascendency and the saloons have but little influence in politics and social life. The soil is also more varied in its productions and the rural districts are more populated. The cities and the towns do not so much have their way, and the country ideas of morals more than offset the tendency of the city and the town toward vice and the lax enforcement of law. The man who stands for public office in North Texas does not ignore the rural vote, but he respects it very highly. So that in a large measure this section has a decided advantage over South Texas.

It is true that among these foreign peoples a great many excellent citizens are found—citizens of solid piety, of evangelical faith, devoted to our laws and institutions, and strong in their moral and religious sentiment. But generally speaking



this is not the case. Hence throughout South Texas there is not much regard for the Sabbath except as a day of recreation and hilarity; the saloon and the beer garden are popular resorts, and there is great antipathy to prohibition of any form.

Politicians pander to this sentiment and the daily papers are mostly in sympathy with this state of things. The Roman Church has a strong hold upon the element of foreigners and its influence neither elevates nor leads them out of these ideas and usages.

So when I entered North Texas it was like coming into contact with another civilization and with the masses of another race of people. They were largely American and mostly Protestant in their faith and customs.

I was not present when the North Texas Conference met in Paris. I was closing out my pastorate in Houston. But my transfer was announced and I was stationed at First Church, Dallas. It was not long, however, until I was at my post of duty and in charge of my congregation. Dallas was then, as it is now, the leading city of this section; but had not fully recovered from the effect of its earlier boom experience. It had been for three or four years, and was then, at a standstill. Its streets, its sidewalks and its buildings showed a lack of progress. Real estate was a drag on the market and business was dull. A part of the street car system was operated by mules and there was a lack of enterprise generally.

First Church was in fairly good condition. My predecessor, Rev. E. L. Spragins, had taken ill during the early spring of the preceding year and died about the Eastertide, and his place had only been supplied by a young minister without much experience. As a result the congregation was somewhat run down, though they had held together and kept things going very well under the circumstances. They were a fine body of



people and possessed wonderful possibilities. Among them were the leading citizens of the city. The business and the professional life of the community was well represented among them.

Though it has been sixteen years or more since I first stood before them, yet many of them are engraven upon my memory as though it were but yesterday. What a splendid Official Board greeted me at their first session; W. White was the chairman, and a finer man was never born of woman. Clean in life, devout in faith, exemplary in word and deed, he had all the marks of a first-class gentleman of the old school. And no man ever wrought more nobly than he in the enterprises of the Church. Even to-day his memory is as ointment poured forth upon the people.

N. W. Finley was vice-chairman; a man of great intellect and large heart, sincere in his love for the Church, a leading lawyer, a profound jurist, the son of a Methodist preacher, and one of the finest characters I ever knew. His death later on, while just in the prime of life, was a calamity to Dallas Methodism.

Thomas F. Nash was an upright man, well endowed by nature, simple in his faith, earnest in his experience and a Methodist of the old type. He was prominent in the social and political life of the county and a jurist of profound integrity. His premature death was mourned by all of Dallas County.

W. C. Padgitt was one of the wealthy business men of the city; progressive, unpretentious and always in his place. He loved his Church and was in sympathy with its enterprises. It was but recently that he laid down his burden and went to his reward.

J. L. Harris was one of the most brilliant men at the North



Texas bar; young, intelligent and gave promise of a long life of usefulness and success, but before he reached his noontide he was called hence. I have never had a warmer friend in any pastorate than this splendid and brotherly man.

All three of the Terrys were men of solid piety, strong faith, unobtrusive in service and useful in life. They have all crossed over to the Church beyond.

Then among those still living I mention A. V. Lane; modest, cultured, refined and true as steel. Joseph E. Cockrell was but recently a citizen of the city, a lawyer of large equipment, of Methodist parentage, robust and true to the Church. J. H. Traylor, business-like, punctual and influential in the political life of the city. He was afterward Mayor of the city.

S. J. Hay, young, strong, vigorous and clean; and S. I. Munger, modest, true and devoted, and liberal and generous in his support of the Church.

There was Judge John Bookhout, strong, virile, intelligent and a credit to the manhood of the city. He was also an eminent jurist. R. E. L. Saner was one of the young men, well educated, a promising member of the bar and full of hope and inspiration. J. L. Long, Superintendent of the city schools; large of brain, possessed of fine judgment, an open face and a man of large influence.

Rev. W. H. Howell was my only local preacher; earnest and enthusiastic, and in the long ago he was the pastor of my sainted mother. N. W. Godbold, spiritual and devout in his religious life, was regarded as the salt of the earth. B. M. Burgher was my Sunday-school Superintendent and one of the most enterprising and progressive men in the congregation.

And there was Louis Blaylock, the most prominent layman in Texas Methodism, the publisher of the Christian Advocate

and an aggressive and dominant factor in all departments of Church work.

These are a few of the many whole-souled workers with whose co-operation I began my pastorate of First Church. But what shall I say of the elect woman of that membership? Time would fail me to take them up one by one and speak of them as my heart suggests. Suffice it to say that I have never known a more devoted and consecrated band of Church workers than the noble women of this congregation.

Rev. R. M. Powers, the noblest Roman of them all, was my Presiding Elder. He was the exponent of the best interests of the masses of Methodism. Solid in physique, substantial in mind, broad in his common sense, practical in his methods, spiritual in his experience, matured in his judgment, he was one of the most useful ministers of his day. But he was in precarious health and died within a few months of his occupancy of the district.

Rev. T. R. Pierce, then editor of the Advocate, was appointed to fill out the unexpired term, as he was on the ground and understood the situation. He was a man of bright intellect, large attainments and one of the leaders in the conference. As a preacher he was brilliant and cultured, and there was a classic finish to his diction. His sermons were so complete that they were ready for the printer just as he delivered them. Several years after that he cast aside his armor and assumed his crown.

Before the year closed Dr. J. H. McLean laid down his duties as Regent of Southwestern University, and as Dr. Pierce was doing double duty, he surrendered the district and Dr. McLean was appointed to fill out the interim. Thus I had three Presiding Elders during the first year of my pastorate at First Church.

I had a large membership and they were scattered generally over the city. At that time the bulk of the Methodists were in my congregation and my pulpit and pastoral duties were exacting. I was accorded a most cordial welcome, for the people were in good case for an experienced shepherd. They not only received me with every demonstration of good-will, but they gave to me their earnest co-operation from the very beginning of my work. I soon found them to be one of the very best types of the old-time religion. They were social, easy of approach, responsive and ready for any good word or work.

I soon set myself to the task of visiting from house to house in order to know them in their homes and to come into touch with their manner of domestic life. I have never known how to preach to people until I have been in the circle of their homes and cultivated them in the sources of their actual living. Then I understand them and am prepared to make a spiritual diagnosis of their several cases. And that sort of work had a fine effect, for it stimulated their attendance upon the Church service and my congregations grew to the capacity of the auditorium. All departments of the Church assumed a normal condition, and I had a most successful year.

The North Texas Conference met that fall at First Church, and the duty of entertaining that body devolved upon me. I was glad of it, for it gave me a good opportunity to learn them by name and to find out their peculiarities. When they came together I was prepared to study them at close range and to become acquainted with them personally in a way that would have been impossible under other circumstances.

As I looked out over them on the first morning of their gathering, they were a fine body of men in their appearance. Some of them stood out prominently in their personalities.

Rev. J. M. Binkley had an Oom Paul cast of face, a large head, a benign countenance and a sort of suppressed twinkle in his eye that indicated a large degree of dormant wit and humor; but, withal, there was an expression of deep conviction, strong will-power and a leader of extraordinary force.

Rev. I. W. Clark had the face of a man of determination, a mouth of unusual strength and an eye of fire and enthusiam. In body he was rotund and wonderfully well preserved in health and vigor. Rev. W. D. Mountcastle looked like a sturdy, purposeful man of affairs, with an intelligent face and deliberate manner. Rev. E. W. Alderson had the head of a man of towering intellect and there was something regal in the tone of his voice. Uncle Buck Hughes had a sleepy expression in his eye, but his broad, tall brow indicated the realm of a logical brain, ready to tackle any problem in theology or Church law.

J. W. Hill had a mild face, of decidedly Irish mold, a round, well-developed head, and an expression of inexhaustible humor. Rev. F. O. Miller had the appearance of one of the younger leaders of the hosts, quiet but very observant. Dr. J. H. McLean had the look of a seasoned veteran who had seen much service, but still active and ready to touch blades with any man in the body. Uncle John Reynolds looked like the saint of the body, ready at a moment's notice to send up a shout of victory.

But it is needless to go further now into these personal pen-pictures, as that will naturally come to my hand as this work proceeds in later years.

Individually many of the members of the conference extended to me a cordial welcome to their fellowship, but generally speaking my reception was a trifle cool and formal. As a body they were not prepared to accept me with open arms.

Transfers for the leading appointments in the conference were not overwhelmingly popular in those days. They took me in on probation; however, they may not have been as conscious of that as I was. I facetiously remarked to one of the leading members with whom I already had personal acquaintance, that I was so much obliged to him for that warm, cordial and brotherly letter than he had already written to me expressing his delight at my transfer to the conference and according me such a fraternal welcome! He appreciated the irony of my words, and with a twinkle in his eye he retorted:

"Now, Rankin, did you want me to lie to you? Why should I thus welcome you to our conference and to the first appointment in it, when you know as well as I do that I ought to be in that pulpit myself!"

There was more of truth than humor in his interesting reply. But, personally speaking, the rank and file of the North Texas Conference, as the years have gone by, have been toward me all that I could ask or desire.

Bishop Granbery presided at the conference. He was then getting along in years, but he was still active and a most excellent presiding officer. He was the soul of courtesy in his relation to the body, and polite toward every member. The intellectual and spiritual development of his sermons was of a high order, and his style was expository and homiletical. As a piece of mechanism they were perfect, and their subject-matter was well tempered mortar; but he was neither vigorous nor captivating in his delivery. His voice was very defective and its modulation poor. But he made a delightful impression on the conference, and he is remembered as a most lovable man and an efficient Bishop. He returned me to the same charge, and also Dr. McLean to the district.

I began my second year under very favorable auspices. I

was well acquainted with my people and our relation was harmonious. I at once began to look forward to a great revival, for that was the one pressing need of the congregation. There had not been one of a sweeping character in years. My pastoral work and my preaching proceeded on that line.

As the year progressed I had a considerable tussle with the gambling dens and the saloons. The former were running wide open and the latter were rather defiant of the law. The county constabulary were either in sympathy with them or very lax in their regard for the law. So one night I made it convenient to visit the gambling dens and gather some data, and I betook myself to the Sheriff's office and told him some things. A few sermons followed and he was not long in getting busy.

As a result, while the evil did not cease, it put it under cover. As for the saloons, I opened up on them. It was time for somebody to come to the front and challenge them to mortal combat, for they had prevailed on the City Council to pass an ordinance permitting them to close at nine o'clock Sunday morning and open at four in the afternoon, giving us a seven-hour Sunday. I threw down the gauntlet and turned loose a fusillade upon them.

I have never lived in a community where the saloons undertook to run openly over the moral sentiment of the people without bantering them to mortal combat. Well, the upshot of it was, we got the Sunday feature of their diabolism before the higher court and they were closed from midnight Saturday to midnight Sunday. It can always be done when the moral element stand by a courageous leader.

As the summer advanced and the fall approached I had things in readiness for my meeting. Rev. George R. Stuart was the preacher to lead in the services, and a large tent just

across the street from the church was the place for it. Great crowds attended, and it took on the form of a union meeting for the Methodists. The other pastors joined forces with us, and I never heard finer revival preaching. George Stuart has no superior, if an equal, in a revival service. Scores and scores were converted and added to the Churches, and the spiritual life of my people received a wonderful quickening. It lifted the whole congregation upon a higher plane of religious life.

In my judgment George Stuart is the most gifted evangelist in Methodism. He is deeply spiritual in his preaching, wonderful in his tactics and irresistible in his appeals. And his methods are in harmony with the usages of the Church. His work always leaves the preacher's influence magnified and his work enhanced. He is a man of large brain, big heart, and his enthusiasm knows no bounds. Not only so, but he is one of the most popular men on the American platform. His work as a prohibition speaker has made him the most formidable foe to the liquor traffic in our Southland. He has done more than any other one man to bring the saloon under the ban of public sentiment and to create public opinion against it.

I had as my associate pastor at Floyd Street Church Uncle Sebe Crutchfield. If I mistake not this was his first station, and I am sure that it was his first city station. He was a noted and most successful circuit preacher. He had a way of his own in managing a charge; and while it did not always suit many of his people, yet it suited him and he pursued it regardless of what others thought of it. He was a man of colossal frame, a head of more than ordinary magnitude, a fiery temperament and a mercurial disposition. When at white heat he was a sort of a cyclone. Yet he had a kind and brotherly heart, and he was mighty in prayer. His sermons were

largely hortatory, but they were like a wild torrent turned loose at times. He and most of his officials at Floyd Street did not get along harmoniously. He did not like their way of doing and they did not like his, and so they frequently came into contact with their points of difference. But Uncle Sebe always had the right of way.

At the close of the year both he and they were delighted that their relation was drawing to a termination. On the last Sunday Uncle Ike came down on his way to conference and spent the day with Uncle Sebe. While they are brothers, they are as much unlike as though they were born of different mothers. The former is sweet-spirited, gentle and very evangelical. Uncle Sebe preached his farewell sermon Sunday morning, and it was a scorcher. It was his last opportunity and he delivered his soul with spice and pepper, with a few warm embers mixed.

At night Uncle Ike preached one of his deeply-spiritual sermons, full of power and unction. It caught the congregation and it swept Uncle Sebe off his feet, for he was a very susceptible listener and singularly emotional. He lead in the closing prayer, and among other things said:

"Lord, we are so glad to be in this meeting and under the influence of the good Spirit. It makes us happy and we rejoice. Lord, we are not always in this good frame of mind. Sometimes we get off the track and get cold. It was the case with us at the morning service and, Lord, thou knowest that thy servant lost his head and spoke unadvisedly with his lips."

But right there he caught himself and added:

"But, Lord, thou knowest that thy servant had cause, for he has had a lot of soreheads to deal with all this year."

During the summer Rev. C. M. Harless, pastor of Trinity Church, had Rev. Abe Mulkey to aid him in a revival service.

His church was a small structure, located on the same site where the magnificent Trinity Church now stands. The meeting had been in progress some days before it was convenient for me to attend, and it had gotten pretty well under headway. I had never seen him in the pulpit and knew nothing of his style and methods as a preacher except what I had read in the papers.

The first night I attended, I presume that I was in a critical frame of mind, for I sat and looked and listened in amazement. I thought I had never heard so much silly nonsense gotten off in the pulpit. My disgust grew as he proceeded, and it was all that I could do to remain and listen to what I regarded as the veriest travesty on preaching. His antics, his grotesque facial expressions, his helter-skelter style and his disjointed subject-matter became almost intolerable. But toward the close he related a touching story, made his application and then appealed to the unconverted; and as it is an easy transition from a state of laughter to one of tears, the audience was considerably moved. The penitents came trooping to the altar and conversions follows.

Then my amazement became more pronounced. I could not understand how such a wonderful result could follow such a performance. I reflected and gradually came to myself, and I realized that I had been sitting there doing what the critical auditor usually does—putting in the hour trying to square the preaching of Abe Mulkey with the simple rules that apply to the ordinary preacher; and such rules are out of adjustment with such a preacher.

Instead of permitting the Lord to use Abe Mulkey in his own way I had made myself a judge and degenerated into a carping critic and had put myself completely out of rapport with the preacher and the intent of the service. I proceeded

to retrace my steps, or rather my processes, revised my judgment, changed my whole attitude toward the preacher and the service, and measured him and his sermon by the result of the service. It then dawned upon me that Abe Mulkey was an instrument in God's hands with a special mission to the unconverted, and that if I had preached one of my well-seasoned sermon on that occasion there would probably have not been a single penitent at that altar.

I therefore then and there made up my mind that any man who tried to listen to Abe Mulkey in a critical mood and made an effort to gauge him by the rules that apply to the trained pastor and preacher, had better be at home in his bed and asleep, and from that day until this present I have never again permitted myself to criticise or find fault with Abe Mulkey's preaching.

He is a rough ashler, called of God to do a work that no other man could have done, and by methods unsuited to all others, and through a style of ministry all his own. And right here I want to bear my testimony to the fact that Abe Mulkey, with all his eccentricity of manner, has been more powerful in the providence of God in bringing sinners into a state of penitence and conversion, and then into a life of righteousness, than any other one man in Texas.

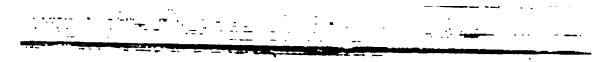
He has also aided in relieving Churches of debt and in projecting Church enterprises more effectually than most any man among us. Bless his dear old soul! His work is nearly done, his course approximately finished, but he has large credit to his effectiveness as a soul-winner in the Lamb's Book of Life. But had he done nothing else except build and pay for that splendid structure for the Orphanage at Waco, that single stroke of enterprise is sufficient to make him immortal in Texas Methodism.

In October, a few weeks prior to the meeting of the North Texas Conference, the Joint Board of Publication for the Texas Christian Advocate met in Dallas and after prolonged deliberation, re-elected Rev. T. R. Pierce to succeed himself for another year as editor of the conference organ. He had filled the position four years. But a few days after this event, for reasons satisfactory to himself, he tendered his resignation with a view to re-enter the pastoral work. The board was reconvened and I was elected to succeed him as editor of the paper. This action was taken without any consultation with me upon the part of the board or any member of it, at that time or at any time previously. None of them communicated with me by letter or word of mouth as to my election, and there was no concert of understanding, for several ballots were taken before the result was determined. I neither desired nor expected such a result when the board came together, for all my plans were in force to finish my quadrennium at First Church. Eleven of that old board are still living, and they will doubtless read these words and they can bear testimony to the correctness of this statement.

The next session of the North Texas Conference met in Greenville with Bishop Galloway in the chair. This was his first visit to the conference, and his coming created more than ordinary expectation. His fame as a preacher was already known throughout Texas. Personally he was one of the most delightful men imaginable, and he made himself companionable and brotherly to all who were privileged to meet him in the private circle. There was nothing of the perfunctory in his manner, whether in the chair or in a social gathering. He was intensely human and enjoyed the fellowship of his brethren. He had a kind heart; he was a good conversationalist; and while he had the power to entertain, he never monopolized the



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attention of any company of which he was a part. He was a good listener and knew how to vary the interest of the social circle so as to break up its monotony. He was in inimitable story-teller and had a large fund from which to draw. He had a fine sense of humor and enjoyed an amusing incident by whomsoever given, and he often related anecdotes to the amusement of others.

As a presidng officers he was easy and graceful. He never evinced impatience, was never brusque, and he was never known to betray the slightest discourtesy to any brother, however humble. He was quick to decide points of order; he was lucid in his interpretation of law, and he often enlivened the tedium of routine proceedings by flashes of wit and humor. Occasionally some report would call forth from him a most instructive and entertaining side-talk. He was firm in his rulings and expeditious in his conduct of the business of the conference. He never permitted business to drag or to become irksome. In the Cabinet he is said to have been patient and painstaking in trying to find the place for the man and the man for the place.

But the pulpit was his throne of power; and it was as a preacher that he excelled all his contemporaries. He was the peer of any man in the American pulpit. He was a born as well as a trained orator. He had all the natural and all the acquired gifts of public speech. Nature had well-nigh perfected him for the pulpit and the platform. He had the build, the personality, the magnetism, the gesture, the voice, the countenance of the man born to sway the multitudes. His mind was of a high order, his faculties well trained and his thinking was orderly and consecutive. He had a brilliant imagination and his style was ornate and rhetorical. His diction was of the purest and most elegant strain and his periods

were rhythmic and mellifluent. His eloquence was matchless in its flow and bewitching in its charm; it was not merely the eloquence of words beautifully woven into polished sentences—it was the eloquence of thought, of emotion and of passion stirred to its profoundest depth. It was not weird, it was not mechanical; neither was it gorgeous nor magniloquent; but it was genuine, it was transporting, it was the harmonious outgoing of the soul's energy through the medium of inspired speech.

His sermon on this conference occasion more than met the expectation of his audience, and it carried everything before it. But the most triumphant occasion I ever witnessed under the ministry of Bishop Galloway was several years after at the great Ecumenical Conference in London, when he stood like a crowned prince before the assembled Methodism of the world, in the pulpit of City Road Chapel, and delivered that epoch-making sermon whose ominous words and burning thoughts made him famous throughout Protestant Christendom. It was an inscrutable Providence that translated him in the zenith of his popular manhood when the world so much stood in need of his wondrous ministry.

It was at this Greenville Conference that Bishop Galloway read me out as editor of the Texas Christian Advocate. Right then began an intimate relation between me and one Texas layman of whom I must speak a few words of appreciation before this final chapter in this volume closes—a relation that has ripened into the maturity of an undying brotherly friendship—Louis Blaylock.

My acquaintance began with him more than twenty years ago, and I learned to love him immediately. His good nature, his big heart, his sincere manner and his friendship for the ministry won me at the first conference at Navasota when I

came face to face with him. Sixteen years ago I became his pastor at First Methodist Church, Dallas. He was on my Official Board, and an intimacy at once sprang up between us. I found him to be a man whom I could trust and one whose judgment was clear and reliable. During the two years following he never disappointed me. I was often in his company and frequently in his home, and whenever any emergency developed I always knew that among the dependable members of my board Louis Blaylock was at top of the list.

Fourteen years ago when I became editor of the Texas Christian Advocate it was predicted by a leading member of the conference that the publisher and the editor would not long live in harmony, since both of them were men of deep convictions and very tenacious of their positions touching many questions. I will admit that on the surface of the suspicions there was something plausible in the prediction.

I have very decided views and there is Scotch enough in my nature to make me almost stubborn when once my mind is made up on a given subject. In addition to this I have enough Irish in my blood to make me very intense and persistent in my adherence to my conclusions. I must admit that I yield to the inevitable as reluctantly as any living man. It is the last alternative with me. And I am not innocent of temper when aroused.

Blaylock has the most of these traits as well marked in his temperament and character as myself, and when two such men come into close relation daily, as is absolutely necessary in the case of the editor and publisher of the Advocate, with a hundred and one things to annoy and provoke differences of opinion and judgment, it appears to the casual observer that all the elements of conflict are on hand.

But my confidence in him and in his disposition to do right,

and his confidence in me to the same end, made the bond of a union with indissoluble ties. And during all these years of trial and vexations we have often had our differences of judgment, and we have sharply contended for our positions, nevertheless he has never doubted my honesty and I have never doubted his. The result is that at no time have we ever faecd a difference that did not solve itself satisfactorily in the end, and also without the slightest jar to our intimate and brotherly relation. We have always stood shoulder to shoulder, whether we have seen eye to eye or not, in the conduct of the Advocate.

There has never been a moment of all these years when I did not love him like a brother, and when he did not love me in the same degree. I would trust my life or my family in his hands and I have every reason to believe that he would trust me equally as far. I have been with him on nearly all sorts of occasions and under almost all sorts of circumstances. I have had the best opportunity of any living man to know him in his motive, in his inner purpose, in his private manner of life. I have seen him in times of testing when if there were weaknesses they would come to the surface; I have seen him in his moments of joy and good humor, and I have seen him when the shadows were falling dark and lowering upon his heart, with the sables of grief hanging around the casket of his loved and departed. Yes, I have seen him in the sunshine and in the darkness, in his alternations of happiness and grief. I know him inside and out, and I am capable of passing judgment upon his life and character.

And right here I want to say that, take him day in day out, up one side of him and down the other, in his relation to men in all the walks of life, I have never known a truer and a cleaner man than Louis Blaylock. I have seen men who made

larger professions, men who more loudly proclaimed their own virtues, men who accentuated their own piety with stronger emphasis; but I have never known a man with purer motives, with a higher sense of personal integrity and of loftier standards of moral conduct for his own manner of dealing with his fellowmen. If there is a mean thing in his nature I have never discovered it.

I am not holding him up as a perfect man. There has never been but one of that sort. We all have our weaknesses and our imperfections; and Louis Blaylock shares these in common with us all. There are some things in him that I would change, as there are some in me that he would doubtless change; but when it comes to clean manhood, to correct ideals, to his disposition to deal justly and honestly with those to whom he stands in any way related in friendship, in business, in counsel, he will come as nearly doing the right thing regardless of circumstances as any man whom it has ever been my privilege to know. And a kinder heart is not found in any human bosom.

He has an ear for the tale of the man in distress; he has a hand for the man in need; he has a heart that responds to the demands of sweet charity. Yes, he is a brother! I have tested him during the passing of a score of trying years; and he is a royal man. The Methodist Church and the Methodist preacher never had a warmer and a more responsive friend. He has opened his heart, his hand, his purse to them on all occasions of their need. Hence there is no man better loved, more largely trusted and more genuinely esteemed in Texas Methodism than Louis Blaylock.

And such is his relation to me that my book would not be complete without his picture and this sketch of his life and

character as I have studied and known him as a man, a brother and a Christian.

As long as I live my affection for him will be tender, sincere, abiding, and when his and my earthly pilgrimages shall have ended, and we cross over to the other side to rest from our labors, our friendship will be intensified and continued under a brighter sky and amid nobler conditions in our Father's house!

But when Bishop Galloway read me out as editor of the Texas Christian Advocate he not only threw me into a closer relationship with Louis Blaylock, but the announcement closed out more than a quarter of a century's experience as a pastor, and no man had ever loved the work of the pastorate more than myself. The announcement did more; it took up the whole current of my ministry and life and turned it into a new and largely different channel. At that time I little dreamed of the magnitude of the task thrust upon me. Could I have lifted the veil of the future and looked face to face upon the field of conflict then stretching out before me, with its fightings within and its fears without, as I have since beheld it and gone up against it, I doubt if my courage had been equal to the colossal undertaking. It would have appalled me and my heart would have shuddered at the contemplation of it.

But the future was wisely concealed from me, and I ventured upon it with hopeful enthusiasm. At that time an old editor, seasoned in such work and scarred by its stupendous conflicts, said to me:

"This is a great responsibility thrust upon you, one prolific of great opportunities for service; but if you do your full duty and remain at your post a dozen years, I doubt if you will have a score of friends left upon the face of the earth to

stand by you in your battle in behalf of truth and righteousness."

His statement sounded like an exaggeration, but there have been times in my experience since then when I have thought that after all he spoke more wisely and truthfully than he knew.

But it is not my purpose in this volume to make record of my experiences in this new era in my life upon the tripod and the platform. In the first place, the material is too extensive and varied; and in the second place, I am still too close to the field of conflict and to the men both in Church and State with whom I have measured swords. The sound of the battle is still ringing in my ears, and the passion engendered by the strife is still hot in my blood. To deal with them and the issues they represent, deliberately and impartially, would be a task well-nigh impossible.

But when a few more years shall ave passed by me, and Time, the great healer, has cooled my brain and chiseled off the asperities superinduced by blows given and received, then in another and a subsequent volume I will be better prepared to make a dispassionate record of my experiences as a journalist and a leader in the realm of moral and civic reform throughout this great empire of the Southwest.

And it is needless to say that in that second and final volume there will be something racy and rare in the literature of the Lone Star State!

In the meantime the material for that volume, most of which is already accumulated, will be added to, classified, digested and put in shape for its final consummation, and about the time that my public life is nearing its conclusion and I no longer hold a place in the limelight, this finished result will be sent forth upon its stormy mission.

Therefore, for the present, this volume is committed to the

public with the hope that struggling young men of worthy ambition, largely dependent upon their own resources for success, may read it and take heart and courage to press forward toward the goal; and with the further hope that those in middle life and those burdend with age, if they chance to see it, may find recreation and entertainment.

The End of Volume I.





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